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Remarks in Self-Defence  
by T. Rowland, 1851.

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Wes. 1509

REMARKS  
IN  
SELF DEFENCE,  
ON AN ARTICLE IN  
"THE WESLEYAN VINDICATOR AND  
CONSTITUTIONAL METHODIST,"  
FOR SEPTEMBER, 1850.

ADDRESSED TO THE  
REV. SAMUEL JACKSON, EDITOR;  
A SUB-COMMITTEE;  
AND THE SUPPORTERS OF THAT PUBLICATION.

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BY THE  
REV. THOS. ROWLAND.

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Leeds:  
WEBB, MILLINGTON & Co.  
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1851.

BW 404  
R 69

N. B. In consequence of my not having seen the "Vindicator" for last September when it first appeared, and various other circumstances which I need not now name, I regret that this publication has been so long delayed.

T. R.

Wes. 1509

## INTRODUCTION.

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DEAR BRETHREN,

Some time after your September "Vindicator" was published, my attention was called to the Article relating to myself. When I had finished reading it, I could not refrain from moistening it with tears, and weeping at the thought of the troubled state of our Zion, and that by some of your own hands, should be opened afresh in my heart, the wounds inflicted by the last Conference.

Your article is indeed *Vindictory*, if by this word with certain Lexicographers, you mean "punitive, performing the office of vengeance." But is it either truthful or merciful?

A Vindicator conducted by Wesleyan Ministers, I think should neither be a Calumniator nor a Gladiator; because while it is either, how can it be a "Constitutional Methodist," sound in evangelical doctrine, scriptural discipline, christian charity and godly practice?

In my opinion a true "Constitutional Methodist," while he firmly adheres to the spiritual principles of our Connexional system, both in doctrine and discipline, is also prepared to modify and adapt it, so that under the blessing of God, our church may become increasingly holy in all her members, and a greater benefactor than ever to our country and the world. Now I consider that your Article on my case widely differs from this representation, and is more likely to degrade than elevate Methodism in public estimation.

That it does me a flagrant and cruel wrong by its uncharitable insinuations, and false statements, must be manifest to all who have read with candour the Pamphlet entitled "Wesleyan Conference Discipline exemplified in the case of the Rev. Thomas Rowland, by a Layman," published by Simpkin, Marshall and Co., London.

So reprehensible however do I consider the Article in your Vindicator, that altho' much of the effect is neutralized by

Conference, to give him time for reflection, postponed the consideration of his case for some days ; when, after another and extended hearing of it, from himself and from others, it was proposed that he should apologize to the Conference for the manner in which he had reflected upon its disciplinary acts, be removed from the Norfolk District, where his conduct had been so mischievous, that he be declared incapable of taking the Superintendency of a Circuit, whilst he retained his present views ; that he should be admonished from the chair, and not be allowed to take any part, as a member in a Minor District Meeting, for the present. After this proposal, further time was given to Mr. Rowland, and his personal friends were advised to converse with him upon his conduct and position ; but he resisted all friendly counsel ; and, when called upon again to answer, he perseveringly declared he had no apology to offer, except what he had previously made. When requested to repeat that, so that the Conference might judge whether it was sufficient, he obstinately refused to do so, stating, as a reason, some unexplained circumstances which had since then transpired. He was remonstrated with on this refusal : and it was urged that what was right for him to do in this respect some days before, must be right for him to do now ; but it was evident that he had previously determined on the course he would pursue ; and so, on his refusal to apologize, or retract, the former proposal was repeated, with the addition that for the next year he be made a Supernumerary. A resolution embodying the proposal was past unanimously, with one exception, by the Conference. Mr. Rowland was admonished from the chair, and was made a Supernumerary. Mr. Rowland and his friends have since denounced this act of discipline as unjustly severe, and have endeavoured to represent the requirement of his removal from Norfolk, as arbitrary and oppressive ; but it must be remembered that Mr. Rowland is still a Wesleyan Minister ; that he is supported from the funds of the Connexion, and that it would be most unreasonable and inconsistent for him to be supported in a County, where, not only now, but also at a former period of disturbance, he has been the instrument of great injury to Methodism : and where his presence and influence would be likely to aid the unchristian efforts of those who employ themselves to promote strifes and divisions in the Societies.



# REMARKS &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

*The nine reasons in the Vindicator not authentic—Several misrepresentations pointed out.—On the fact of my being a Supernumerary.*

Here you are wrong at the commencement, for you say, "The following is a copy of the reasons contained in the document, as it was read to the Conference." The true copy with my signature attached to it, which I put into the hands of the Rev. S. Tindall, at Yarmouth, was worded as follows :

"If the design of our proceedings as a Minor District Meeting, be to lead to the expulsion of Messrs. Hardy and Colman, then I cannot be a consenting party to that design—

1.—Because, though I do not justify their conduct as here complained of, far otherwise, yet I believe them to be such Christians, that under the circumstances of the case, Jesus Christ himself, who "is head over all things to his church," would not expel them.

2.—Because, in this affair, they were brought to trial, not by their own pastors, who might be expected to know best both their characters and the circumstances of their circuit, but by two ministers of other circuits.

3.—Because when tried in their own circuit by a constitutional court, which consisted of seventeen Leaders and Trustees, they were unanimously acquitted.

4.—Because if the seventeen Leaders and Trustees, were wrong in acquitting them, we five ministers who compose this Minor District Meeting, may be wrong in reversing their decision. For infallibility no more belongs to us than to them.

5.—Because, were they expelled, it appears from the

statements of their pastors, the work of God, now reviving in various parts of the circuit, would be seriously injured; and hundreds of precious souls, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and regenerated by his Holy Spirit, but who approve of the acquittal, may be severed from our church, and perhaps be driven into the world and sin.

6.—Because their expulsion might lead to the most awful results in my own Circuit and other Circuits in the District.

7.—Because, though Mr. Wesley so faithfully condemned and exposed, in his “Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” certain great evils in some of the clergy and members of the Church of England, yet, he remained in that church till his death, not saying if such improper characters were allowed to be ministers and members of it, he would not. And, when he was the Curate of Epworth, while, no doubt, careful to put away all wicked doers from the communion of his own parish church, as far as he could, yet he never officially and authoratively, interfered with offenders in another parish. And, as to members of his own Societies, he never expelled but in accordance with his own rules.

8.—Because the wrong doings of these brethren, prominent in the prevailing agitation among us, have been, I believe, occasioned by the proceedings of the last Conference, in the expulsion of brother Everett, brother Dunn, and brother Griffith. And, at a proper time and place, I think I am prepared to show, that in our pious zeal to put down the “Fly Sheet” evils, in those expulsions, we unintentionally violated the laws by which we are governed: and consequently, every minister among us concerned in the proceedings, “ought to do the penitent,” before he judges and condemns any in our flocks who have got into error, through the error of their shepherds. To this conclusion I have been reluctantly brought, by reading the President’s pamphlet, and using other means.

9.—Because, in regard to such as may be prominent in the unhappy agitation in our connexion, considering how that agitation commenced among our ministers themselves, we ought not to disregard our Saviour’s injunction about the tares and the wheat, “Let both grow together until the harvest.”

This copy agrees with the original now in my possession, which I held up in my hand before the Conference, and pointed to the interlineations, alterations and additions, as



made in the Minor District Meeting. When Mr. Tindall produced the document that I gave him, and had read a little of it, numbers of the ministers loudly complained that they could not hear him. It was then handed to Dr. Hannah, the Secretary, and by him read to the assembled ministers, in City Road chapel. In proof of my statement, I appeal to all who were present, except yourselves. The document in your "*Vindicator*" is spurious, if even it were read in the Conference. And is there not a striking difference between your *spurious* copy and that which is authentic?

Why leave out of the first Reason my words, "I do not justify their conduct as here complained of, far otherwise?" For had the complaint adduced been supported by the most satisfactory evidence, then, in my opinion, Messrs. Hardy and Colman ought not to have been expelled. But to me the evidence was not satisfactory; and I had long known the accused, and esteemed them for their christian character: as they had filled with honour to themselves, and much benefit to the Holt Circuit, the highest offices which as Laymen they could sustain. Norfolk may well be proud of William H. C. Hardy, Esq., as an upright County Magistrate, an accomplished gentleman, and a generous promoter of every thing designed and calculated to advance the interests of his country. There is not I believe an important town or village around his residence at Letheringsett Hall, for some scores of miles, where he has not appeared as the chairman of Wesleyan Methodist Anniversary Meetings; delighting the audience with his chastened eloquence, and aiding with his purse the most valuable institutions of piety and mercy. And with regard to Mr. Colman, the good which has been effected by his eloquent sermons in the pulpit, and his telling speeches on the platform, and by his zealous and well conducted efforts, not only as a Local preacher, but also as a Circuit Steward, has been more or less witnessed and admired by thousands of his christian brethren.

But to return to your *Vindicator*. Another item in my first reason not inserted in your statement, contains the words, "Head over all things to his church," applied to Jesus Christ. Surely these words ought not to have been omitted; for how can it be right for any christian minister to expel from the church of Christ any members of it, whom the great Lord and Master would not exclude, nor shut out of heaven? Besides, I think it should ever be gratefully remembered by

every British Protestant, to the honour of the Scotch Covenanters, that one grand principle for which so many of them so nobly shed their blood was, that "Christ is the alone Head and King of His church."

In the 2nd reason of your document, you say, "their own pastors who must be the best judges as to whether they deserved expulsion." In the authentic copy, are the words "their own pastors, who might be expected to know best both their characters *and the circumstances of their circuit, but by two ministers of other circuits.*" Now in all ordinary cases, who are so likely to be acquainted with the members and circumstances of a circuit as the resident pastors, or so proper to originate the trial of an alleged offender? Be that as it may, these omissions in this part of your document I think unwarrantable.

You have given a part only of my fourth reason. On that reason I have to remark that as to how far Dr. Dixon may be correct in saying that a "Minor District Meeting consisting exclusively of ministers, may be expected to decide in favour of themselves," or that whether or not it be desirable, as solicited in the Memorial sent from the Southwark circuit to the last Conference, "that an equal number of Laymen should be added to that of the Ministers in the Minor District Meeting," I do not pretend to decide. But I do maintain that the Minor District Meeting held on the case of Messrs. Hardy and Colman, was specially liable to err in judgment, and come to a wrong conclusion on the subject for which it was convened, through the peculiar circumstances in which its members were placed, for to say nothing of the fact that we had all signed the President's Declaration, and that more than one of its members had previously spoken of both those gentlemen in strong terms of condemnation at the Special District Meeting in Lynn, and also in the General District Meeting in Yarmouth, Mr. Tindall, the chairman, had not only expelled Mr. Keed, but also written an objectionable letter that had been published in the "Watchman," which was exceedingly offensive to Messrs. Hardy and Colman, and against which both of them entered their earnest and indignant protest, as containing a "vile, slanderous attack on their character." After such a transaction as this, is it not to be feared that the confidence of our people will be weakened, I will not say in the infallibility, but in the impartiality of a Minor District Meeting, and not the less so, when they

consider how Mr. Tindall was honoured and I degraded by the last Conference, and when they look at his position at York and at mine in Leeds?

At the Special District Meeting in Lynn, Mr. Tindall condemned brother Budden for even dining with Mr. Hardy, though I believe it was done, rather to confer pastoral benefit on Mr. Hardy's family, than to gratify his appetite. On my declaring that I considered Mr. Hardy incapable of doing what was rather insinuated than broadly affirmed concerning him, Mr. Hanwell replied to the effect that "he knew Mr. Hardy as well as brother Rowland, and he agreed with Mr. Tindall." Mr. Rattenbury, in siding with Mr. Tindall, and against Mr. Budden on the subject of dining with Mr. Hardy, mentioned, "that in his own circuit he had refused to ride with a gentleman in his carriage, on account of the part which that gentleman had taken in the agitation." The President stated that "one or two days in a week, or occasionally, we could and would live, if necessary, on water-gruel to serve the cause of God." I mention this conversation to show, that Messrs. Tindall and Hanwell, with whom I was associated in the Minor District Meeting, had both expressed themselves in such a manner as to justify my fourth reason. Not only so, but in the General District Meeting, Mr. Tindall had a day or two before intimated that Mr. Hardy could not remain as the Treasurer of the Childrens' Fund, on account of his conduct, thus speaking of him as a degraded criminal before his trial had come on.

I think it the more needful thus to go into detail, lest any should suppose in my fourth reason, I meant to disparage the constitution of a Minor District Meeting, by conveying the idea that if seventeen persons in a Leader's Meeting may come to a wrong decision, five Ministers in a Minor District Meeting, may do the same. For that was not my intention, nor is that reason so stated as to warrant such a construction. The latter part of it says, "*We five* ministers, who compose this meeting, may be wrong in reversing their decision, that is, not any five ministers in any Minor District Meeting, but *we five* are especially liable to be wrong in the matter on account of the circumstances just mentioned. And I meant to show, that this view was corroborated by the remark, "for infallibility no more belongs to us than to them." For if that remark be true as applied to any Circuit Meeting, consisting of seventeen leaders and trustees, and of any Minor



District Meeting consisting of five ministers, how much more so must it be as applied to the two meetings in question, and especially the latter one.

Look again at your fifth reason. Why leave out of that the important clause relating to the work of God, "now reviving in various parts of the (Holt) circuit" where Messrs. Hardy and Colman have long lived and laboured? While some circuits, which might be named, were quite free from reform agitation, and, boasting of "Methodism as it is," were decreasing in numbers and languishing in lukewarmness; in Holt, "God's work was reviving in various parts." But this cheering fact, even after it had appeared in the notable "Watchman," finds no place in your unauthorised document.

But still more glaring is your version of my 7th reason. It makes no mention of Mr. Wesley's "Appeal to men of reason and religion." It inserts the word "agitated" which does not occur in the authentic copy. And if you meant that your readers should infer from your statement that I had represented the venerable Wesley as remaining in the Established Church, that he might the more effectually condemn and agitate it, nothing could be more unfair. His noble purpose doubtless was, to revive in it, and every other church in the land, true Protestant Christianity. And was it right for you to omit the item concerning Mr. Wesley as "the Curate of Epworth?"

Your most remarkable omission however occurs in your 8th reason. At the end of the clause, "every minister among us, concerned in those proceedings, ought to 'do the penitent,'" you stop, and leave out the concluding, and important sentence. How is this? Why not give the whole reason and without any mutilation? In trying to account for your omission, I thought at first, you must have written in ignorance. But in your note, p. 146, you mention the "President's Pamphlet," and charge me with aiming to bring it "into derision." So you *knew* that in my 8th reason the President's Pamphlet was *referred to at its close!* Ought you not in all honesty to have inserted the words in their proper place and connexion, as explaining how I had been led to view the preceding agitations, as having been occasioned by the expulsion of the three brethren? But you not only leave the last sentence of my 8th reason out of your document, but afterwards in alluding to it, actually charge me with having written it to bring the "President's Pamphlet into

derision," which is utterly untrue, for such a thought had never entered my head.

You affirm p. 145, "It appeared in evidence, that Mr. Rowland was not only present at the former Conference, but also acquiesced, by vote or otherwise, in the acts of discipline named in the document." From your statement here, a reader might be led to conclude that I both spoke and voted at that former Conference in favour of expelling Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith. But I did neither the one nor the other. When the vote was called for by the President, I did not hold up my hand against the expulsion of any one of them. For at that time, I was not prepared to show "that in our pious zeal to put down the 'Fly Sheet evils,' we were unintentionally violating the laws by which we are governed." But I did not, could not, and would not hold up my hand *for their expulsion*, because, I thought to put them on a par, by that awful punishment with certain other culprits of the vilest description, was out of all character. But when you say that I "acquiesced by vote or otherwise, in the acts of discipline named in the document," you may refer to two circumstances which deserve notice.

1.—You may refer to a record in the Minutes of Conference for 1849, p. —, which says, "The following Brethren during the sittings of Conference, made statements equivalent to a signature; Joshua Fielding, S. Kay, A. Learoyd, and T. Rowland." Though I refused to sign brother G. Osborn's Declaration against the "Fly Sheets," yet it is here asserted that I made a statement "equivalent to a signature."

2.—You may also allude to my conduct in the Special District Meeting, held in Lynn, January, 1850. There I stated, that I viewed the resolutions which had been proposed for the adoption, and signatures of the assembled ministers, as being substantially the same with the President's Declaration, that had then just come out, and that I had glanced over. Both the Resolutions and the Declaration I considered as avowing that we would stand by the essential principles of our ecclesiastical system both in Doctrine and Discipline, which we were, as Wesleyan Ministers, already bound to do by our own solemn and voluntary engagements; and that though I had been twitted for being a Reformer, yet I was not a Revolutionist. When I had proceeded only thus far in my speech, I was interrupted and told that many of the brethren, who were standing with their hats in their hands,

must leave Lynn by the next train that would start very soon, and that it was very desirable to have their signatures to the Resolutions. This precluded my pointing out several objectionable particulars in the Declaration, as I intended. Considering however the Resolutions and the Declaration as a *simple avowal* of our *determination* to adhere to the *essential principles* of our system, I acquiesced in them. I seconded the Resolutions which were proposed by Mr. Hanwell, and subsequently signed the President's Declaration.

Deeply did I regret that there was so little time for cool deliberation, and discussion on subjects of such vast importance to our connexion; and that both the Resolutions and the Declaration should have been disposed of in such a hurry. One or two of the ministers expressed an earnest desire for the honour of having their names published in the *first list* of signatures in the Watchman. But would it not be well, if in case another President's Declaration should be issued, that the ministers should convene Special District Meetings throughout the Connexion and there examine and discuss the document with calmness, and take sufficient time for thought and prayer before they give their signatures?

For when a great emergency arises to justify the sending forth a President's Declaration, surely it must be such as to justify the calling of Special District Meetings together on the occasion, and to put us on our guard to "do nothing rashly" in the matter. If the Declaration be accompanied with a request that we sign and return it without delay, then the greater caution may be necessary, "For I have often found" as a learned and sensible lawyer once observed to me, "that when a client writes for advice, and urges to have an answer by return of post, it was sure to be a serious case requiring much cool deliberation." I need not make the application.

And why sign a President's Declaration at all, if we can do something else more accordant with our views, and which is an "equivalent?"

Now it appears there was no need for me and Messrs. Fielding, Kay and Learoyd to sign the President's Declaration, because our verbal statement made at the Conference in reference to it, would of course have been an "equivalent" to our signature, the same as to the one of brother G. Osborn. And if in our case, why not so to all the rest of our ministers?

For I cannot but think that the verbal statements of the twelve hundred ministers and upwards, who signed both the Declarations, would as much deserve to be considered as



being "equivalent" to their signatures, as those of us above named brethren. Still, in accordance with my remark that though I had been twitted as a Reformer, yet I was not a Revolutionist, I signed the President's Declaration. If you consider this to be an evidence that even at that time I "acquiesced" in the acts of discipline, which expelled Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith from our church, be it so. But I had not *then* discovered in those "acts" the violation of our laws, nor had the awful work of expelling godly, and useful office-bearers of long standing concerned in the agitation, been carried to such fearful extremes, as soon afterwards was witnessed in various parts of our connexion. Had the time allowed, I should have stated my objections to that part of the President's Declaration, which says that the "Act of discipline," which expelled Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith was "righteous and necessary." For to this I could not agree, when the said "Act" was done. Subsequently my disagreement with it became much stronger and more decisive. So far from my conduct at the Special District Meeting in Lynn calling for any censure, the President himself, spoke of it and me in terms of commendation in the presence of a numerous deputation of Laymen, as well as before many of the assembled ministers. It is well known that at two different Conferences, I gave notice of a motion on the important subject of having some modification of our rules, as bearing on our Stationary Committee, and to render the Triennial Stations of our ministers more fully the recognized usage of our Connexion. But no opportunity having then occurred for the sufficient discussion, and satisfactory settlement of the motion, I intended to bring it forth again at the following Conference. I therefore signed the President's Declaration, because I believed it would promote my design.

In reference to my paper with the nine reasons, you assert "that it was drawn up before the commencement of the sittings of the Minor District Meeting, whose decision it pre-judges and condemns." To make this objection the more telling, you put the word *before* in italics. Now the fact is, as I stated to the Conference, that the reasons were written *partly* in the Minor District Meeting, and all of them were revised *after* the whole evidence had been received. Besides, what was the real design of the Appellants in this case, but to prove that the verdict given in favour of Messrs. Hardy

and Colman at Holt, was a *factionous one*, and thus prepare the way for Mr. Budden, their superintendent, to expel them if he judged it proper to do so, and that despite of the acquittal pronounced by the seventeen Leaders and Trustees? Now on the supposition that the appellants could and would establish their point, yet I could not think that this would justify the expulsion of the two christian brethren. And when all the evidence had been adduced I was still more deeply convinced than before, that to cut them off from our section of the christian church, would be an unwise and unrighteous infliction, fraught with great evil, and clearly contrary to the mind of Christ.

But you say of my document, that "it had almost immediately afterwards been published, at length, both in Mr. Kaye's Times, and in a separate form." Did you know when you published these words what was the full and true "length" of my document? If so, then why did you not give it in its full and true "length," and without such omissions and curtailments? So far from my document having as you assert, been given at "length" in Mr. Kaye's Times, or in a separate form immediately afterwards, I am not aware of its being given at "length," in *any way or form* till my *trial* at the Conference. And when all the excitement of the Conference had subsided in *August*, the document with my reasons is not fairly given at length even in your *Vindicator for September*. Must I ascribe your conduct towards me in this instance, to your *ignorance* or something *more lamentable*?

But you add, "to the injury of Methodism in Yarmouth, and the neighbouring Circuits." Yet you do not point out the "injury." Ask the over-whelming majority of our own pious office-bearers and members, and also the candid ministers and members of other churches in Yarmouth, Norwich and the neighbouring Circuits of Norfolk, for their opinion on the matter, and I am persuaded they would tell you that this serious charge which you bring, about injury done to Methodism by me, IS NOT TRUE.

You next say, "Though it was stated that some of the professed Reformers of Methodism were dishonourably sequestered in a room adjoining that in which the Minor District Meeting was held, to hear by stealth, what was said and done." In reply, let me tell you that I utterly disapprove of such dishonourable conduct as you here describe, whether Reformers or Anti-Reformers of Methodism. But your

description is not worthy of confidence. For the Minor District Meeting was held in our *large vestry*, May the 17th, at six in the *morning*, and finished its work by ten o'clock. The persons referred to "in an adjoining room," were not found there till about nine o'clock the same night, when not The Minor District, but the *general* District Meeting was sitting, not in the vestry, but in the *school room*. As to the truth of this statement I appeal to every minister belonging to the District, and to the chapel keeper.

But you go on to state, that "It is very difficult to believe, that they could in such a situation be able to supply a copy of the reasons, in the order and at the length, in which they were issued from the press." What then, my brother Samuel Jackson, and my brethren of the Sub-Committee, who conduct this "Vindicator?" Did you not hear me tell the Conference "that the publication of my reasons was done without my sanction, and knowledge?" Still, it must have been done by *some party*, and you suggest that it is difficult to believe it was done by those Reformers of Methodism, "dishonourably secreted in an adjoining room." If then you mean to insinuate that I was a violater of truth in this matter, my prayer for you shall still be, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

However, as a proof that I merit not this unjust, insulting, and cruel insinuation, I produce the two following letters.

"To the President of the Wesleyan Conference.

"Reverend Sir,

"From the report of the proceedings of Conference, contained in the WESLEYAN TIMES of last Monday, I find in the case of the Rev. Thomas Rowland, a resolution, stated to have been passed by the Conference, to the following effect:—'That Mr. Rowland is bound and required to make an apology to this Conference for the *publication* of sentiments so objectionable.'

"This alludes, as you are aware, to the publication in THE WESLEYAN TIMES of the reasons assigned by him, at a Minor District Meeting, for not concurring in the expulsion of Messrs. Hardy and Colman. Mr. Rowland is reported in THE WESLEYAN TIMES to have denied in Conference being a party to the publication of the reasons, &c. ; but it is evident his brethren do not credit his denial, or they could never require him, in the words of the resolution, 'to make an apology for their publication.'

"I feel it to be my duty, under such circumstances, to clear Mr. Rowland of being in any way a party to the publication, by solemnly assuring the Conference I had that report of the Minor District Meeting sent me by another member of the Conference, with a request that I would forward the same to THE WESLEYAN TIMES. I am betraying no confidence in making this statement, as I shall refuse to furnish any further information on the subject, or answer any brotherly or unbrotherly question in relation to it; my object not being to inculcate other parties, but to exculpate a man whose frank denial has evidently been disbelieved by his brethren. I know not whether the party who furnished me with that report voted for Mr. Rowland's degradation; but if Dr. Beaumont's and Mr. Budden's were the only hands held up against that resolution, he certainly did *not* vote against it.

"As I knew the reading of the District Minutes would bring this case before the Conference whether this report were published or not, I felt no hesitancy in acceding to the request of one of your own body in sending the same to THE WESLEYAN TIMES; for I thought it would show if Mr. Rowland had signed the President's Declaration without duly reflecting on the subject, it was very probable others had done the same. Nor was I sorry to be able to show to the Methodist public that the President's pamphlet had carried conviction to at least one individual!

I am, Rev. Sir, yours, very respectfully,

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"P. S.—I should have forwarded this to the Conference a day or two earlier, but thought it right to communicate my intention first to the gentleman who furnished the copy."

The following is a correct copy of the official reply:

*"Wesleyan Conference, August 20th, 1850.*

"Sir,

"The President of the Conference requests me to inform you, that he has received your letter of the 15th, instant relating to Mr. Rowland. He is glad to learn that you can corroborate Mr. Rowland's denial of his participation in the publication of the document in question, although no such corroboration was necessary to secure his belief.

I remain Sir, on behalf of the President,

Yours truly,

Mr. W. Watton.

G. OSBORN."



Through the kindness of Mr. Watton the original is in my possession. But even now I do not know *who* "the member of the Conference" was that sent Mr. W. the report of the Minor District Meeting.

But you state p. 147, that "Mr. Rowland was made a Supernumerary." This is true, and I cannot easily describe my feelings on the occasion. It seemed as if by an earthquake shock, that I had been suddenly hurled into a dark, unlooked for and unknown region. When left alone, I could neither smile nor weep, being almost stunned with astonishment and grief, at finding myself thus wrenched from that regular ministry, in which for thirty-seven years I had been occupied, and with which my holiest and happiest feelings had been associated; and that I was now cast with my grey hairs on the wide world, without a home. Yes, "Mr. Rowland was made a Supernumerary." And when this had been done, the Watchman, that had basely attacked me *before* my trial (?) came on in the Conference, and whose attack I was not allowed to answer, though when I rose to do so, scores of the ministers, who were to be my judges, were actually reading the paper;—informed the public "that in a few years more I must necessarily have been made a supernumerary." But surely it is no reason why any party should knock the generous writer on the head, and end his life before the proper time, because he must so shortly "go the way of all the earth,"

Yes, "Mr Rowland was made a Supernumerary." But was it right, still to recognise me as a Wesleyan Minister, and yet bar me from doing the full work of one, when God had not unfitted me for the full work by affliction; nor I disqualified myself by any moral delinquency; when the Yarmouth Circuit had unanimously invited me for another year, and though some hundreds of separate letters were, sent by the people to the President, urging their request for me to remain among them.

Yes, "Mr. Rowland was made a Supernumerary," but thanks to many of our people, who have manifested their sympathy by their liberal contributions, to save me from pecuniary loss. Yet have not others justly complained of my being placed by the Conference, as a punishment, on the Worn Out Ministers' Fund, *before* I am *worn out*, thus turning that Fund which is supported by the peoples' money into a Penal Settlement? Still, in my estimation, no amount

of money could compensate for my being deprived of my ministerial status, which I value more than gold; and for the wound inflicted by my unmerited degradation. I consider myself as being punished for what I did in the Minor District Meeting, and adhering to the views which I there expressed, and in violation of the principles which formed the basis of the Methodist Conference. In proof of this statement I appeal to the minutes of 1744 :

“How far does each of us agree to submit to the judgment of the majority ?—A. In speculative things, each can only submit so far as his judgment is convinced. In every practical point, each will submit so far as he can with a clear conscience.

“Can a christian submit any further than this to any man, or number of men on earth ?—A. It is undeniably certain he cannot, either to Bishop, Convention or General Council. And this is that grand principle of private judgment on which all the Reformers proceeded. ‘Every man must judge for himself, because every man must give an account of himself to God.’ ”

In allusion to the above particulars, Mr. Myles says, “Let it never be forgotten that these principles formed the basis of the Methodist Conference.” See his Chronological History of the People called Methodists, p. 26.

Yet for exercising the right of private judgment in opposing the expulsion of Messrs. Hardy and Colman, and stating the reasons for my conduct, I am made a supernumerary; though had I acted otherwise. I should have violated my conscience and sinned against God.

After making me a supernumerary under such circumstances, and lacerating my feelings beyond the power of words or tears to express, it might have been expected that no further injury would be perpetrated against me, and that every proper courtesy would be shown by every brother minister. Instead of this, I am sorry that I have to complain of the conduct of the Rev. John Scott as a Treasurer of “the Worn Out Ministers’ Fund.” For he has withheld £30, for furniture which is usually given to a supernumerary, and without assigning any reason, though he has been applied to for it. To two letters which I have written to him, he has not yet condescended to return an answer, though the first was sent him in the beginning of last November. If he be one of the “Sub-Committee” connected with your Vin-



dicator, which says, p. 147, "Mr. Rowland is still a Wesleyan Minister, that he is supported by the funds of the Connexion," that does not mend the matter.

When I had occasion to write to the late Lord Melbourne, while he was the prime minister, he politely answered me by return of post. And to a letter which circumstances called me to write to the late Dr. Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, he replied promptly and in a manner worthy of a christian bishop. I thus mention the conduct of those distinguished characters as worthy of Mr. Scott's attention.

Before I left Yarmouth, I received a kind letter from the Rev. J. P. Haswell in Leeds. informing me of a house to let near his with seven rooms in it, at a rent of £18 a year, and stating his desire to take it for me. But at Norwich my old friend, Mr. Freeman had generously offered me a house with eight rooms in it rent free, as long as I liked, if I would reside there. Another old friend Mr. Richardson had kindly offered me a house at Gravesend rent free for a year. At Norwich however, I could not reside, for I was ordered away from Norfolk by the Conference. Now after I have complied with the harsh requirement to leave Norfolk, and thus sacrificed Mr. Freeman's noble offer, besides the house at Gravesend, I think it is really too bad for Mr. Scott to withhold the £30. usually given to a supernumerary for furniture, considering that the money comes from the pockets of the people. Besides, if the £30 be paid, I shall still, by the Conference making me a supernumerary, be deprived of nearly one half of the amount of my income that I should have received as a regular minister. And if Archbishop Whately, in his work on "The Errors of Romanism," be correct in saying, that "To inflict any pain or penalty for religious opinions, as such, is *persecution*, whether intended as a punishment or not;" then what must be thought of the act which made me a supernumerary, on account of the part which I conscientiously took in the Minor District Meeting in the case of Messrs. Hardy and Colman?

I think it was quite sufficient that Mr. Scott, at the last Conference, seconded the proposal for my degradation, without his now "stopping the supplies." And is it really needful or desirable to have a ministerial Treasurer of our Connexional Funds so wanting in due regard to the apostolic precept, "Be courteous?"

When you say that "The Conference, to give me time for

reflection, postponed the consideration of his case for some days ;—and again further time was given to Mr. Rowland, and his personal friends were advised to converse with him upon his conduct and position," the statement at first has the appearance of great kindness and forbearance. But I think it would have looked much better if *only some hours before* I had been placed at the Bar of the Conference as such a glaring culprit, my "personal friends," or one that had been in the Stationary Committee, had been appointed to meet me, to have informed me plainly, if I had not been represented in the Stationary Committee as such a great offender, that unless I submitted to certain conditions, I should be censured, and sent away from Yarmouth, yea and out of Norfolk. That my punishment to some extent had been previously decided upon, in the Stationing Committee, as far as it could then be decided upon, will be shown hereafter. Had my "personal friends" been instructed, before my case came on in the Conference, to furnish me with all proper facilities to make my defence, this I should have deemed a real kindness. This was the more needful, as I was then daily suffering acute pain in my face, and because of the peculiarity of the case itself. Instead of this, a very different course was pursued. After I had been exhibited to the Conference as a heinous transgressor, by the inquisitorial, stringent and protracted process to which I had been subjected ; then, but not till then, some time was proffered me with personal friends to converse with me. Under these circumstances I viewed the proffer as designed by means of my "personal friends," either to coax and persuade me to become a consenting party to my own undeserved degradation, or to make me appear culpably obstinate in refusing all friendly advice, whether offered to me in public or private.

Assuredly if any thing was likely to induce me to yield, it was neither harsh treatment, nor despotic threatening, but the winning influence of "personal friends," backed with solid and convincing reasons. But to name, as was done, Dr. Newton among my "personal friends," after the part he had taken in the painful affair, I considered as an insulting mockery. For he was the prominent proposer of many of the cruel measures adopted by the Conference against me. Marvel not then, that I so resolutely declined the offer of postponement, and the interposition of personal friends, but I did so, not from want of respect to the Conference—far

otherwise. O! how my heart sickens when I think that so many of our leading ministers should have wished me, (and so large a majority should have signified their approval by vote) to violate my conscience, that I might retain that position in the Conference, which an honest and upright discharge of my duty in the capacity of judge, was thought sufficient to deprive me of.

You assert "It was evident that he had previously determined on the course he would pursue." Indeed! To whom was this evident? If to you, I am sure it was not so to me. Bishop Hall says "Crimes look strange to the innocent." Now somehow or other, I really did look on myself as innocent. When held up as being quite the reverse, I was taken by surprise. All the objections which were so vehemently urged against my nine reasons and conduct, appeared so weak, that I was shut up to the single course of standing by my principles, come what might, and leave the result with God. But I never dreamt of such proceedings of the Conference in my case, till I actually witnessed them with painful astonishment. So that your assertion in this case is truly preposterous.

You state that "the Resolution" concerning this matter was passed unanimously, with one exception, by the Conference. This is not correct. For I have not only heard on good authority, that many of the ministers did not vote at all, that at least a *dozen* hands were held up against the Resolution but also I can testify of my own personal knowledge that two other ministers, besides the noble minded Dr. Beaumont, voted in my favour. I need not tell you why I do not give the names of the two other brethren, for were I to do so, you are aware how it might be turned to their disadvantage in a future Stationing Committee or Conference, as you must also recollect the unkind and undignified annoyances to which the "one exception," Dr. Beaumont, was subjected. While his vote in my view was invested with a special value, being given under such circumstances, his masterly speech on the memorable occasion, certainly did honour to his splendid abilities, his manly independence, and his generosity of soul. How strikingly it contrasted with the little and dastardly sayings of some other prominent speakers, who seemed more anxious to crush me than to avoid injustice. The reason why you are so very particular in informing the public that "the Resolution was passed unanimously, with one exception, by



the Conference," is best known to yourselves. But as certain influential ministers appeared so determined to degrade and punish me for what I consider, the conscientious discharge of my solemn duty in the Minor District Meeting, numbers of the brethren might naturally conclude that to vote in my favour would excite their displeasure and cause the voters to be marked men.

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## CHAPTER II.

*The cases of the Revs. D. Walton, J. Everett, S. Dunn, and W. Griffith; showing that they involve a violation by the Conference of its own Laws.*

You say that my document "contained severe and unwarrantable reflections on the principles and administration of the Conference." When you have pointed out such reflections in the document, I will apologise and retract them. It is true, in the document I give it as my decided opinion, that the administration of the Conference in the expulsion of Messrs. Everett, Dunn, and Griffith involved a violation of our Laws, that this violation was unintentional, and had occasioned the unhappy agitation prevailing among our people, that every minister among us, concerned in that violation, should "do the penitent," meaning by this expression, that every one of us, as far as practicable, should labour to undo the mischief produced by that agitation, which labour would be a characteristic of a true penitent. Now this opinion was not gratuitously given in a public meeting to a mixed or promiscuous assembly; nor even to a society of our own laymen, but before four brother ministers, convened with myself to adjudicate in a case of great importance. I had no intention to reflect severely or unwarrantably on the principles and administration of the Conference, but to treat them all with becoming respect. At the time of giving my opinion in the Minor District Meeting, I was not aware it would be mentioned out of that meeting. Here, however, I must say, that the great anxiety manifested by the ministers there, and in other places, to keep my nine reasons a profound secret—a conduct so different to that of Mr. Wesley, who observes, "I desire to do all things openly and above board, I would have all the world to know, and especially our society see, not only all the steps we take, but the reasons why we take

them,"—I must say the great anxiety of the ministers for concealment in this matter, was likely to make others the more eager to learn and publish it.

Is then my document, for so stating my opinion, justly characterised by you, as "containing severe and unwarrantable reflections on the principles and administration of the Conference,"—or are the respectful animadversions that may be published in this free country, in the nineteenth century, concerning the proceedings of the British Parliament, the acts of Her Majesty's Government, the doings of an Ecclesiastical Synod, Assembly, Convocation, or Methodist Conference, or the official conduct of any public men to be so characterised?

If so, then how ought your readers to characterise some of the statements in your "Vindicator" concerning me, concerning the "principles and administration;" of numbers of our most pious and useful brother ministers, and concerning the godly and excellent ministers and members of other churches?

Mr. Wesley charges many of the Clergy, with not observing the Rubricks of the Established Church, and as to several of these red Rules or Rubricks, he says, "you have never pretended to observe them." See his Works, vol. 8, p. 33. After referring to various heinous sins practised by the Clergy, he says, "How great will your damnation be, who destroy souls instead of saving them! Is not this the real ground, the principal reason, of the present contempt of the Clergy?" Ibid p. 179. Many other quotations, as you may know, might be given from his writings, in which he goes much farther in condemning the clergy than I go, when I say "we unintentionally violated the laws by which we are governed," including myself in the condemnation, and that "every one of us ought to do the Penitent."

Now it is true that such of his opponents as Bishop Lavington, Bishop Gibson and Bishop Warburton, might be disposed to call his statements "severe and unwarrantable reflections on the principles and administration," of the Church to which he had sworn obedience, and no doubt they actually did what was tantamount to this, but their assertions, like yours, were not proofs. But neither his own Diocesan, the Bishop of Oxford, nor the highest authority in the Established Church, on account of Mr. Wesley's condemnatory, and telling statements, proceeded to make him a supernumerary, or officially to punish him. So that in the Church, which Methodism was intended to reform and amend, Mr. Wesley met with more

just and generous treatment than I have experienced from the Methodist Conference.

You state that I was asked if I still held the sentiments expressed in the document and was prepared to show that the Conference had violated its own Laws." "Mr. Rowland declared he held the principles expressed in the document—and with the exception of the phraseology at the close of the eighth reason, he felt no regret for what he had written."

Though I was convinced *before* I was put on my trial, if trial it might be called, of the truth which I had avowed concerning the "Conference having violated its own Laws," yet after that trial, I was still more fully convinced of it, and I should have deemed myself unworthy of my office as a christian minister, if I had not persevered in what I considered to be the truth.

For much as I revere the Conference, and much as I am disposed to honour it, yet I revere the truth still more, and I am resolved to give far higher honour to the Lord Jesus, who among his other glorious Titles is called "The Truth," than I am inclined to render to all my brother ministers put together. At the same time I would not forget that what does appear to me to be sufficient evidence of the truth in this serious matter may not appear so to others. But as you have published to the church and the world that I was asked at my trial, "if I was now prepared to show that the Conference had violated its own Laws." I feel that in connexion with other considerations, you have laid me under a solemn obligation to attempt it.

The case of the Rev. Daniel Walton claims first our notice, for it was occasioned by the "Fly Sheets" and most probably had some influence in leading to those expulsions referred to.

The discipline exercised on Mr. Walton as on Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith was avowedly based on the Declaratory Rules of 1835.

Those Rules affirm "that not only the Conference, but all its District Committees, whether ordinary or special, possess the undoubted right of instituting, in their official and collective character, any enquiry or investigation which they may deem expedient." See the Min. 1835, p. 112.

Here two important principles are manifest. 1.—That ministers *only* have the *right* to *try a minister*, or to "institute any enquiry or investigation" affecting his conduct and character.



2.—That the “enquiry or investigation” concerning a minister must be made in a constitutional meeting of ministers in their “official and collective character.” These principles are deemed so important that our people are prohibited from interfering with them, even by Memorial, in the June Special Circuit Meetings. For it is declared that the “Disciplinary Jurisdiction of the preachers over each other, and their right of regulating among themselves all that relates peculiarly and specifically to the christian Ministry and the Pastoral Office, are not to be considered as subjects open to official interference by Memorials of the Meetings now constituted.” Min. 1835, p. 116. Some of our people have been blamed, and if I am not mistaken, even expelled for expressing at a public meeting their sympathy for the three ministers so painfully severed from our church, on the ground, that the conduct of such sympathisers infringed the two principles of the Rules just noticed.

But now in what way did the Conference violate these Rules in the case of Mr. Walton? In answer to this momentous question I have to make the following statement:

A certain anonymous publication called the “Fly Sheets,” contained various allegations and insinuations which were considered exceedingly injurious and offensive, both to a number of ministers and laymen in our Wesleyan church. Mr. T. P. Bunting considered himself as attacked and aggrieved in that publication.

Circumstances arose which seemed to point to the Rev. D. Walton as being concerned in the vexatious attack. For one of his colleagues, the Rev. W. T. Radcliffe, had seen a paper lying on Mr. Walton’s study table, while Mr. W. had retired for a short time and Mr. R. was left alone; in that paper Mr. R. saw certain expressions and sentiments which he supposed to be the same as subsequently appeared in an after-number of the Fly Sheets. Unfortunately, and as I think, without any evil design, before mentioning the matter to Mr. Walton, Mr. R. named it in confidence to another colleague, the Rev. N. Curnock. That colleague divulged the secret to a gentleman at Bradford in Yorkshire, then I have been told it came to the ears of the Rev. John Bowers of Didsbury, and soon after reached Mr. Bunting.

Under these circumstances, I think, Mr. Bunting’s proper course was firstly to communicate privately with Mr. Walton in accordance with our Lord’s injunction, “If thy brother

shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, &c." Matt. xviii. 15-17. But if the private communications were not satisfactory, then secondly, he should as a Wesleyan, have appealed to a Minor District Meeting.

Now instead of acting so, at a large Missionary Committee Meeting where many laymen and ministers were assembled for Mission purposes, after several telling speeches had been made by some of the most influential persons present, in severe condemnation of the "Fly Sheets" and their authors, just at the moment of extreme excitement, Mr. Bunting in the most pointed manner alluded to Mr. Walton as having written a part of the "Fly Sheets," unjustly reflecting on his character. Mr. Walton, like many others in the meeting, was evidently taken by surprise. He declared that he had never written any thing to the disparagement of Mr. Bunting's character.

The Rev. R. Tabraham enquired, "if Mr. Bunting had complied with our Saviour's injunction in the 18th chapter of Matthew," as already quoted. Mr. Bunting owned that he had not done so, and asserted, that the injunction did not belong to his case. In this view he was supported by the President.

Mr. Bunting proceeded to ask Mr. Walton, "whether or not he had written any part of the 'Fly Sheets,' especially in that number which contained an attack on his (Mr. B's) character?"

Mr. Walton refused to answer this question. And such a question would certainly have been improper, for that meeting, had Mr. Radcliffe himself proposed it, though a minister, and then in possession of the evidence which he afterwards produced in the Minor District Meeting. But there in the Missionary Meeting the question was still more improper, and coming from Mr. Bunting a layman. For his so proposing it was clearly a violation of the first principle of the rules of 1835, as already explained.

It is true that Mr. Bunting requested and obtained the consent of the President and the ministers present to ask this question. But the President and the ministers present, who were the law makers should not have been the law breakers. But so it was in this instance. For instead of requesting the laymen to retire, they were allowed to remain. And permission being granted to Mr. Bunting to put his question to Mr. Walton as already described, in that large and mixed Missionary Committee, consisting of ministers and lay gentle-

men. Thus the second important principle of the rules which requires that the "enquiry or investigation shall be instituted in a meeting of *ministers in their official and collective characters*," was manifestly, though unintentionally, violated.

Had the ministers present been aware, that Mr. Bunting's question would so directly impugn Mr. Walton's moral character, and lead to such serious consequences, I cannot for a moment think that they would either have sanctioned Mr. Bunting in omitting our Saviour's injunction contained in the 18th chapter of St. Matthew, or the violation of the two principles in the Rules of 1835. Still the deed was done.

When the Minor District Meeting on the case of Messrs. Hardy and Colman was held in Yarmouth, a request was respectfully made to allow Messrs. Charles Barber and Skinner, senior, two valuable and influential office bearers, to be present. To this I said, I saw no objection. But it was replied, that it would be contrary to usage if not to rule, and so the two brethren had to retire. And though in numerous trials of laymen in various Circuits, when the accused have requested the presence of a few of their lay brethren, being members of society, yet this has been refused, while ministers have taken part in the proceedings to which the accused and others have objected. But in the Missionary Committee Meeting, held in a place adjoining our Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester, not less than twenty or thirty laymen were allowed, contrary to our Rules, to be present, while Mr. Bunting put a question which seriously affected the moral character of that excellent minister of Christ, the Rev. Daniel Walton. I readily acknowledge that some of those laymen are wealthy and liberal, and at times, have gloriously swelled the annual income of our Missionary Society. Their help to that Society, it is sincerely hoped will continue and abound. But were they for three or four years to come to raise the Society's Income to £200,000—or even £300,000 per annum, and if instead of raising as was lately proposed at the Educational Meeting in Manchester for our Day Schools £10,000, they were to guarantee £30,000 or £40,000 and as much in proportion to all our other Connexional Funds; yet, their giving all this money as an expression of their attachment to "Methodism as it is," would not disprove the illegality of the proceedings of that memorable Missionary Committee Meeting where such a glaring wrong was done to Mr. Walton.



And were such an unwise and unconstitutional course to prevail as for matters to be introduced into one meeting which properly belong to another, and for a member's character and conduct, to be suddenly attacked by some strange and unlooked for question being asked, what confusion and evil must ensue!

The double violation of our Rules here pointed out was the more inexcusable, because in the same place, and the day before an extraordinary Meeting of Ministers had been held agreeably to the appointment of the Conference, for the express purpose, among other things, "to converse together, and seek a closer union among ourselves."

Why did not Mr. Radcliffe or some minister there ask Mr. Walton the question about the "Fly Sheets"? Why leave this serious question to be asked by Mr. Bunting in the Missionary Committee Meeting, where so many laymen were present?

And when Mr. Bunting requested permission to put the question to Mr. Walton, why did not the President at once refuse and stop a proceeding so at variance both with our Lord's requirement before quoted, and the Rules of 1835?

Some weeks after this transaction, when called on by certain friends in private, Mr. Walton had refused to answer questions about the "Fly Sheets," or to make the statement as he was desired to do. At the instance of Mr. Bunting a Minor District Meeting was convened. It consisted of the Revds. Dr. Newton, Wm. Naylor, Robt. Newstead, Jon. Crowther, and Geo. Osborn. The Revds. John Burdsall and Jas. Everett, were summoned to give evidence, but were not present. The Revds. W. T. Radcliffe, John Ryan, and W. J. Skidmore appeared as witnesses. The decision of the Meeting was,

1st. That he (Mr. Walton) be solemnly admonished from the Chair by the President of the next Conference..

2nd. That he be declared to be disqualified for the present, for being the Superintendent of a Circuit.

But as Dr. Newton, the Chairman of that Minor District Meeting, and most, if not all its members had been in the Missionary Committee Meeting, a party to the violation of our Rules, as before stated, in their mode of commencing action against Mr. Walton, their proceedings were necessarily vitiated.

At the General District Meeting, in May 1849, when the

Report of the Minor District Meeting was brought up, and its approval and adoption, moved and seconded, a long and animated discussion followed. Mr. Walton was urged and entreated to state what he knew as to the authorship of the "Fly Sheets." This he refused to do. Prayer was offered to God, by several of the ministers, and a gracious influence seemed to pervade the Meeting. Again Mr. Walton was requested to say what he knew in relation to the "Fly Sheets" and for peace, with weeping I joined in urging the request. Mr. Thornton and Mr. Walton retired to confer in private on the subject. On their return, it was expected that the desired information would have been given. But Mr. Walton still firmly refused, feeling and avowing that he could not in honour comply. And I cannot help now admiring his noble firmness in the affair, and sincerely regretting that *I* should have uttered one word to shake his manly, and honourable purpose on the occasion. At length the Report of the Minor District Meeting was adopted in the following terms:

1st. That this Meeting expresses its high estimate of the care, patience, and impartiality, with which the members of the Minor District Meeting have investigated this painful subject, and its grateful satisfaction in the christian spirit and ability with which the minutes and other documents of that meeting have been prepared.

2nd. That this meeting approves and accepts the Report of the Minor District Meeting; and having entire confidence in the justice of the conclusions which that meeting has recorded, recommends to the Conference the adoption of these conclusions, and the recommendations therein appended.

At the Conference following, the official Report on the case of Mr. Walton was approved and adopted.

And the Conference by sanctioning the case, became a party to the violation of its own Rules of 1835, which the case involved as I have before explained.

If you ask why I did not point out the alleged violation of the Rules, and protest against it both at the May District Meeting and at the subsequent Conference, I must candidly confess, that I did not clearly see the violation either at the District Meeting or at the Conference as I ought to have done. Still, not feeling perfectly satisfied with the proceedings in this case, I *did* put a question to the May District Meeting to this effect: "If the Missionary Committee Meeting in Manchester, did wrong in allowing Mr. Walton's affair

to be introduced there, contrary to Rule and order, then to whom were the members of that Meeting answerable for the wrong?" In the midst of considerable excitement I was answered to the "Conference. As the President himself was the Chairman of that Missionary Committee Meeting, a charge must be preferred against him." It was also stated to me, "that each of the laymen would be answerable to his Leader's Meeting in his own Circuit, and each minister was answerable, as well as the President to the Conference.

In the case of the Rev. D. Walton, an important requirement in our Church Discipline was disregarded, deserving of special notice. For it is "a great and important general maxim, essential to a due observance of the christian law of peace, and to the orderly transaction of our public business : viz., that every meeting among us shall confine itself to its proper and definite province, do *ITS OWN WORK* in the spirit of piety and kindness, and refrain from interfering with the work of others." See. Min. of Conference for 1835, p. 165. The words "*its own work*" the reader will find on examination are put in italics, no doubt to render them emphatic and impressive on the point. Now was not "the proper and definite province" of the Missionary Committee Meeting in Manchester, already mentioned, for its members, after prayer for divine direction, to consult together how to maintain and extend as far as they could our Wesleyan Missions?

Was not "its own work" to receive reports of the operations of the District, to arrange for anniversary meetings to be held in various Circuits and to dispose of the Missionary Deputation to the best advantage?

But to "institute any enquiry or investigation" concerning Mr. Walton and the "Fly Sheets" was not in the province of that meeting. Instead of the strange questioning which was then introduced being "*its own proper work*," it had no right to meddle with it, for that painful work according to the Minutes plainly belonged to a Committee consisting exclusively of ministers. As if aware of this, Mr. Bunting requested permission to introduce it. And hence, the proper work of the Meeting was interrupted, the President consulted the ministers present on the subject, and the illegal proceeding was allowed by the pastors themselves.

So that perhaps had my enquiry been prosecuted with the fidelity and energy which its importance demanded, what scenes might possibly have been witnessed, and what difficul-



ties encountered! For then, twenty or thirty gentlemen might have been summoned before their respective Leaders' Meetings to answer for their conduct in the Missionary Committee Meeting. And further the President and some other forty ministers, who were supposed to be present, out of the 75 belonging to the District, on the same ground, might have been put on their trial at the following Conference, unless previously tried in their own District Meeting.

*Let us now consider the cases of the Revds. J. Everett, S. Dunn and W. Griffith.*

When the expulsion of these able ministers of Christ was effected, deeply as I deplored the event, yet for a time, I sincerely endeavoured to justify the proceedings. At the earnest request of the Rev. W. Sharpe, the chairman of my district, I wrote a defensive letter to Mr. Joseph Massingham of Norwich. I also voluntarily wrote another on the same subject to Mr. Hardy. My principal ground of argument in both letters was, that if the rules or laws of 1835 be ever so objectionable, still we are bound to obey them till they are constitutionally repealed or amended. But now I have a very different view of this momentous and painful affair, and to show that in expelling those ministers, the Conference of 1849 "unintentionally violated the laws by which we are governed."

1st. Observe long before 1835, our ministers had been subject twice a year at the District Meeting, and the Conference to a most stringent and searching enquiry and investigation. For there, the four following questions were regularly put concerning every minister in the connexion: "Is there any objection against him as to his moral and religious character? Does he believe and preach our doctrines? Does he approve of our Discipline and enforce it? Has he abilities for our work?" Now when it has been officially announced at both the annual examinations in answer to these questions that there was no objection against a brother, he was properly considered as standing quite right and honorable in his position as a Wesleyan minister. Such was the case as I always understood it from the year 1813, when I entered the ministry till 1849. And such was the view of most, if not all our ministers with whom I have conversed on the subject. But were the case the reverse of what I have stated, if a minister may be still chargeable with such serious delinquency as calls for his suspension or expulsion from the ministry, then what are the four all-comprehensive questions

but a delusion, the annual examinations but a farce, and the official declaration of "no objection against him" but a tantalising falsehood?"

2nd. But if in connection with either of our annual examinations, or from any other quarter, some matter of complaint arise, of such a nature as is likely seriously to affect a minister's character, status or official existence, then we have another important rule for our guidance. It says, "Whenever the chairman has received a complaint against a preacher, either from the preachers or the people, he shall send an exact account of the complaint in writing, to the person accused, with the name of the accuser, or accusers, before he calls a meeting of the district committee to examine into the charge." See Minutes of Conference, vol. 1st. p. 259.

Whether the questioning process exercised in the annual examinations of our ministers had in any instances been so unfairly and oppressively applied, as to lead to the making of this rule in 1792, I am unable to affirm. But I think this important rule must commend itself to every man of understanding and reflection. It is not unlike the excellent law which governed the judicial proceedings of the ancient Romans long before they became papists; and well might it have been for millions, had they by firmly adhering to it, after they changed their religion prevented the horrors of their noted inquisition. For Festus said, "It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that which he is accused, have the accuser face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid to his charge. For it seemeth to me unwarrantable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him." See Acts xxv. 16-27.

According to our rule the accused must be furnished "with an exact account in writing," both concerning the "complaint" and "accusers," so that he might have every proper facility to make his defence.

Now had Mr. Everett's chairman sent him "an exact account in writing" of any "complaint" against him? No. So far from it, in his official report of the District Meeting, when Mr. Everett had undergone the regular annual examination, the statement was, "No objection." He was asked by the President "Are you the author of the 'Fly Sheets?'" He refused to answer that question; demanded to know what accusation there was against him and who were his accusers, and declared his readiness to meet them with a reply.

But as he would not declare whether or not he was the author of the "Fly Sheets," he was *expelled*, on the ground of contumacy; after having been in the ministry nearly forty years with an unblemished character, and rendered important service to the connexion both as an eloquent preacher and an able writer.

Messrs. Dunn and Griffith were there each asked by the President, "Are you the author of the Fly Sheets?" and each refused to answer the question.

For refusing to answer this question and to discontinue the publication of the periodical called the "Wesley Banner," Mr. Dunn was expelled. He had been for some years a laborious and useful missionary in the Shetland Islands, and subsequently was stationed in a number of our first circuits in England, where he was honoured with much success as a faithful minister of Christ. His numerous publications do him great honour as a diligent scholar and judicious author, both zealous and wise in doing good to the church and the world. While in the pulpit he approved himself as a "workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," in the parlour he ever spoke and acted as became a pious, kind and prudent christian pastor.

As Mr. Griffith would neither answer the question about the "Fly Sheets," nor promise to cease writing for the "Wesleyan Times," unless other ministers would engage not to write for the "Watchman" he likewise was expelled.

I could not but grieve to see him thus severed from our Zion in the midst of his days and usefulness, with his soul full of liberal and patriotic sentiments, with his heart throbbing for the good of man and with capabilities for extensive usefulness.

Now in expelling Mr. Everett, despite of the official report from his District Meeting, that "there was no objection against him," and without any "complaint" being proved or even alleged against him, the Conference, I think, clearly violated the good old law of 1792 by which we are governed.

And though it was made a matter of complaint against Mr. Dunn that he would not give up the publication of the "Wesley Banner," and also against Mr. Griffith that he would not cease to write for the "Wesleyan Times," when they were ordered to do so by the Conference; yet that was not the great ground of their expulsion, but their refusal to answer the question "Are you the author of the Fly Sheets?"



That was their chief ostensible offence for which they were severed from our church.

So that they were both chiefly punished for an affair in which no complaint was proved or even alleged against them. For they were not charged either verbally or in writing with being the authors of any part of the "Fly Sheets." Therefore in their case, as in that of Mr. Everett, the Rule of 1792 was violated. Whether these three ministers did or did not write the "Fly Sheets" is not the point under consideration. I have yet met with no evidence that could make me believe that they were the authors of those papers. Besides, I am sorry to have to state that these three brethren, after being so long honourably employed in our ministry, were not allowed fairly to speak in their own defence. Though Mr. Griffith, and especially Mr. Dunn, repeatedly and earnestly requested to say a few words, yet they were obstinately clamoured down. In any British Court of Justice, I think, they would have met with more decorous and gentlemanly treatment.

I have given my opinion on these three expelled christian ministers as an act of common justice to their character, that God may be glorified in them, and to neutralize the efforts of their opponents, who in various ways are labouring to tarnish their reputation by falsehood and slander.

3rd. But it has been asserted that the expulsion of these brethren was legal, because they were tried and expelled in accordance with the Rules of 1835, which authorised the Conference to "institute any enquiry or investigation," deemed expedient. But where do these Rules or any others on record in our church say that if a minister refuse to answer such questions "Are you the author of the Fly Sheets?" he shall be expelled! Or when in all the past history of Methodism did ever such an expulsion occur before the year 1849!

These Rules with all their vagueness and latitude of expression must be understood as being intended to apply *only* to such matters as in their nature do not render a minister liable to be put formally on his trial, nor to need his being furnished with "an exact account in writing of the complaints," involved in the enquiry.

1st. Because all grave ministerial offences were already sufficiently provided against, in the four great and comprehensive questions which are regularly proposed in the two



annual examinations. For they embrace all that relates to our moral and religious character, the doctrines we believe and preach, and also our personal approval and exercise of our whole discipline.

2nd. In regard to any serious "Complaint" which might affect a minister's status or official existence among us, provision is made in the excellent rule of 1792, before quoted.

What then is the real design and scope of these Rules of 1835, now under consideration? I believe it is this, they declare or proclaim, that besides the four great questions before noticed, that the Conference and all its District Committees have the "right to institute any enquiry or investigation," which, though subordinate may include minor improprieties of conduct which every man of God, and faithful minister should constantly avoid, or inferior duties that he should conscientiously practice. This right the Conference had long exercised. Before any minister was admitted into full Connexion it had been usual to ask him such questions as these, "Do you use tobacco? Do you drink drams? Do you preach at five in a morning when you can get a Congregation? Do you meet the children of our people every week for religious instruction? &c. But during what was called the Warrenite agitation, circumstances arose that led to the Rules relating to such minor questions as those just mentioned, to be declared or confirmed by the Conference of 1835. But it was not meant or intended, in my opinion, that these minor questions nor any other, should be *enforced by the penalty of expulsion*; or that the good old Rule of 1792 should be superseded by them.

For had it been proposed in the Conference that in order to carry out these Rules of 1835, that good old Rule of 1792 referred to, should be laid aside, would not such a popish, anti-Protestant proposition have been at once indignantly rejected by most, if not all the ministers then present? And where now is the minister among us, that would be willing to rescind that same Rule?

Mr. Grindrod, in page 76 of his Compendium, says that "the old law of 1792 has been *invariably* acted on in the trials of preachers since 1835, as well as prior to that period, no preacher in the intervening years having been subjected to any judicial censure, either in a District Meeting, or at the bar of Conference under the declaratory act;" and supposing the possibility of circumstances occurring in which the appli-

cation of this act would be deemed necessary, he adds that "in every such case a strict inquiry should be instituted into the causes of the omission of the ordinary course of preliminary proceedings, and if any blame was found to attach to any, he should be duly admonished, and the accused should have every facility for his defence."

The explanatory statement here made concerning the Rules of 1835 is corroborated by the testimony of the late Rev. R. Pilter. Being deputed by the Conference to point out the real meaning and intention of those Rules, he said to the Rev. J. Bromley, "Don't you see, that this law was made to provide for those little things, those nonsensical peculiarities of which you have so large a share, and concerning which it is not worth going into the formality of a charge." However that venerable servant of God, the Rev. G. Marsden, whom I have always greatly loved and esteemed, and who with Mr. Pilter was deputed by the Conference as an expositor of those Rules, gave a widely different explanation. He said, "You see, brother Bromley, there are some very dreadful crimes in which it does not do to wait for a single hour, but they must be proceeded with forthwith, and it is to meet these awful cases that this enactment is appointed." See the Rev. Jas. Bromley's Speech in the Guildhall, Doncaster, Oct. 29th, 1850.

Now if Mr. Marsden's interpretation be correct, does it not then follow, that while other Protestant churches in Christendom, though as zealous for christian purity as ourselves, do not deem such Rules to be at all necessary as a safeguard against "very dreadful crimes" in their ministers,—while the Penal Code of Britain has been properly mitigated to suit the improved state of our country, and while it is a fact that our Connexion prospered, and our ministers maintained a lofty character for holiness for nearly a century, through God's blessing, without these Rules of 1835, that then, the very year after the establishment of our Theological Institution, these Rules became necessary, as if our ministers more than others, and more than had been known before, had become liable to commit such "very dreadful crimes" as must be proceeded with without an hours' delay?

Such a representation I cannot admit, for I consider it an undesigned libel on the Wesleyan ministry.

Without doubt the occurrence of "very dreadful crimes," in a minister especially, should be looked after with vigour

and promptitude. This is far more important than to expel or annoy any of the pious laity among us for uttering an opinion on certain points of our Discipline which may differ from our own. But in a case of "very dreadful crimes," we may in "an hour" just as well apply the good old Rule of 1792 above named as the Rules of 1835,—yea, and much better. For he that is capable of committing "very dreadful crimes," must certainly be capable of giving a lying answer to any "enquiry" put to him as supposed to be authorised by the Rules of 1835. And the investigation that may require to be commenced within "an hour" may call for days before it can be rightly finished.

Besides, does Mr. Marsden really mean that when a minister is spoken of as having committed some "very dreadful crimes," he would deem it right, to put a question adapted to such a case, and require an answer on the penalty of expulsion? If so, then with what consistency would he condemn a Popish Priest, or a Popish Book, such as "The Catholic's Daily Companion," published at Liverpool by R. Radcliffe, 49, Castle Street, 1850, and noticed in the "Daily Times" for Tuesday, Nov. 26th, 1850—where questions are put the most revolting to christian purity? If it be said, but the Rules of 1850 authorise to "institute any enquiry or investigation." True. And therefore, unless you are ready to make such an application of them as would be fitter for that execrable book just noticed or the "Confessional," than any Protestant ecclesiastical Court, and such as would be scouted in our British Courts of Justice; you must allow, that these Rules of 1835, were not intended for "very dreadful crimes," but as I have already stated to provide for minor improprieties of conduct. And this view is fully borne out by Mr. Pilter's official statement.

4th. But I will now advert to the Pamphlet of the Ex-President, the Rev. Thomas Jackson. For here is another powerful item for my argument,—an item which gave the finishing stroke in confirming my conviction on this momentous affair. After adducing abundant evidence to show, that from the beginning, our ministers have been accustomed to frequent and searching enquiry and investigation, in reference to the expulsion of Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith for refusing to answer the question, "Are you the Author of the 'Fly Sheets?'" mark the Ex-President's statement. He says "That in this instance the recognised practice of



personal examination was applied to a new subject, the authorship and publication of certain pamphlets; and that no example is upon record in which men were expelled for refusing to answer questions precisely similar to those under consideration," p. 38. And such was the nature of this "new subject" called the "Fly Sheets," that it is further admitted, that it "had not been contemplated by Mr. Wesley with all his tact and knowledge, nor by the Conference in any of its Legislative acts," p. 398.

A new subject then having arisen in the form of the "Fly Sheets," that subject having been more than once denounced both *in* the Conference and *out* of it in words of burning eloquence,—and that subject having produced some painful effects, the proper course to be pursued was, to meet the "new subject" with a *new Rule* or *Law*, but not with such a Declaration as that of the Liverpool Conference in 1847. For we have often made it our boast, that our Rules have been formed gradually as called for by passing events, and as indicated by the guiding hand of providence. An appropriate and useful lesson we might also have learnt on this subject from our national Legislature. For in the affair of O'Brien, the Irish Rebel, when our excellent Queen had decided that the sentence of death pronounced against him should be commuted into transportation for life, a serious difficulty was discovered in the way. To meet this difficulty, and to combine the manifestation of the Royal Clemency with a due regard to law and order, a new Act of Parliament was promptly, yet deliberately passed. And if it was important that both the House of Lords and the House of Commons should thus legislate that Mercy might be extended to that malefactor; how much more important for us to form a new Rule to meet "the new subject" to save those three valuable ministers of Jesus Christ from *ecclesiastical death*? For the course pursued at the trial and expulsion of those brethren could not be in accordance with the intention of the Rules of 1835, nor any other existing Rules in our church, because, as stated by the Ex-President both the chief Judge and principal witness in the case, such a subject had never before been contemplated either by Mr. Wesley or the Conference. And already it has been shown that the Rules of 1835 were intended for minor improprieties of conduct, but not for "very dreadful crimes," or such serious offences as require expulsion or suspension.



Therefore not only in the case of Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith, but in that of Messrs. Walton, Burdsall and George, and also in the subsequent one of Mr. Bromley,—we made such an application of the Rules of 1835, as was never intended, because never contemplated by the Conference when forming and passing them in our Legislative capacity.

And where was the equity and impartiality of expelling the Revds. Jas. Everett, S. Dunn, W. Griffith and Jas. Bromley; and of so severely dealing with the Revds. D. Walton, J. Burdsall and J. George,—while not the slightest censure was passed on the authors of the publications called “Vates” and “Papers on Wesleyan Matters,” though containing slanderous attacks on the character of some of our ministers as bad as any in the “Fly Sheets”?

The testimony of the Rev. R. Eckett on this subject, I think is deserving of some notice. For though he has been removed from our Connexion, and is in the Association—and though in my opinion, he is neither very generous nor just towards Mr. David Rowland, my excellent brother,—still few have so thoroughly investigated our Wesleyan Laws and Usages,—nor in my opinion surpassed him in ability for the work. Still, while he advocates the questioning, inquisitorial process in certain special cases, yet his judgment is clearly against the Conferential proceedings.

He says, “It was most unwise, unrighteous, oppressive, and tyrannical, to capitally punish the suspected brethren—for refusing to answer the questions proposed to them, or for refusing to submit to the degrading conditions attempted to be enforced on them—without first allowing them a full, patient, and candid hearing. Before they were treated as convicted criminals, they ought to have had a full opportunity of justifying or explaining themselves, and also of showing cause why they should not be subjected to punishment. This is a right freely allowed in all our Courts of law, and no British judge would dare to refuse it to a felon. By the intemperate and violent conduct of the Conference towards the brethren who have become victims of its despotic authority, it has dishonoured itself, and excited a very general feeling of indignation and disgust.” See “An Appeal to facts,” p. 14.

And I now ask you, Mr. Editor, and you gentlemen of the Sub-Committee, if at the regular examinations in the District Meeting and Conference, it had been declared there was “no

objection against you," and then, before the close of that same Conference, you were punished, for doing, as you thought, your duty in a Minor District Meeting,—would not your regular examination, in your eyes, look like a solemn, tantalising farce? In such a case, would you not have expected before your Trial and punishment to be informed of the complaint against you, and as to who were your accusers, according to the Rule of 1792? But observe what occurred in my case. In a friendly conversation, Mr. Tindall, the Representative of our District said to me on the first day of the Conference "your Yarmouth appointment will come before the Conference." After parting, it struck me, something painful is perhaps brewing. I wrote to him, and requested him to inform me in what way, and with what design the Yarmouth appointment was to come before the Conference? *He never yet has answered my note.* The Yarmouth appointment did come before the Conference, and as you are aware, though there was no objection against me, resulted in my degrading punishment, and removal from the Circuit, contrary to the unanimous invitation of the people, as if their wishes deserved no regard. But you may say however, Mr. Tindall could not, or did not know for what design the Yarmouth appointment would come before the Conference, and especially he might not know that it would result in my removal from the Circuit. Yet, before the Conference began he told Mr. Briggs, my senior Circuit Steward "that his impression was, I should be removed from the Circuit." Mr. Brownell also, my colleague, had told several of our people in Yarmouth that he expected I should be removed from the place. It is supposed that he had learnt this from his brother-in-law, the Rev. J. Farrar, or some other minister at Richmond. After speaking to Mr. Briggs about my removal from the Circuit, and a few days after the Conference commenced, Mr. Tindall came and begged, and entreated me to withdraw my Nine Reasons. That I declined to do. But even then he gave me no intimation that I was going to be put on my Trial, nor did he verbally, or in writing, furnish me with any formal complaint or charge, but stated in substance that it would be better for me if I withdrew my nine reasons. Now if you had been subjected to such a violation of our Rules, and to such a torturous course of action, would you not have considered the proceedings more fitting the dark ages of popery, than of protestant England in the nineteenth cen-

ture? You may plead, after all, that according to the Poll Deed, the Conference has the legal power to degrade or expel "any of its ministers for any cause it may see proper." Be it so. But will this be found a sufficient plea at the bar of God "when we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ?"

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### CHAPTER III.

*The serious charge concerning a "former disturbance" in Norfolk, in which the "Vindicator" alleges that I was "the instrument of great injury to Methodism" investigated—the occasion of the disturbance—how it was brought under the notice of the Conference with the proceedings which followed.*

To criminate me still more seriously, when referring to the County of Norfolk, you even affirm that "where not only now, but also at a former period of disturbance, he was the instrument of great injury to Methodism," p. 147. This is indeed a heavy charge. To be "the instrument of injury to Methodism," which like the late Dr. Chalmers's, I consider to be "Christianity in earnest," is repugnant to every feeling of my heart. To know that I had been the instrument of the *least injury* to Methodism, in relation to the smallest village, or family, or the poorest individual, would grieve my inmost soul; but to be "the instrument of *great injury* to Methodism" in the county of Norfolk, the very thought of it, if true, would really overwhelm me.

But here I solemnly challenge you to the proof of your heavy charge. To what *disturbance* do you allude? *When* and *where* did it happen? Was I "the instrument of great injury to Methodism" in the Lynn circuit where I had laboured as the superintendent so happily for more than three years and a half, where I found on my arrival three hundred and seventy members in our societies, supporting only one minister, and that on a low scale of allowances, but where I left five hundred and eighty five members, supporting on a more liberal scale of allowances two ministers, where during my ministry three or four new schools had been established, all our connexional funds raised, and *fifteen hundred* pounds procured to lessen the debt on our Tower Street chapel, and where so many of our people have expressed their desire for me to be stationed amongst them since that time?

Was it in the Norwich circuit where I so delightfully spent



three years, that I was “the instrument of great injury to Methodism?” Ask our best friends there, if I was not, in connection with Mr. Constable my superintendant, an instrument of great benefit to Methodism in that circuit, in increasing the numbers of its members, improving its finances and raising the moral and spiritual character of the people? Was there in proportion a family in “Norfolk that gave more than mine, while I was in Norwich towards the Centenary fund, or was there in all that county one minister “in labours more abundant” than myself in 1839 in the general Centenary movement?

Early in the year 1849 when I was in Norwich, one of the circuit Stewards and some of the leading friends, in a private interview, earnestly requested me to consent for them to bring me forward in the March quarterly meeting, to be invited as their superintendent at the following Conference; but I declined the offer on the ground, that Mr. Sharpe, the then superintendent would only have been with them two years. But would such an offer have been made had your statement been true?

If I had really been “the instrument of great injury to Methodism” in the County of Norfolk, why was I appointed again to that county and sent by the Conference of 1849 to Yarmouth? Did I desire this? Was it not my earnest wish and request to go elsewhere, on the ground of family considerations? But did not Mr. Sharpe the chairman of the Norwich district urge my appointment to Yarmouth, pleading that the friends there so much desired it? Did not Dr. Bunting and other ministers join in begging me to consent to go to Yarmouth, stating not only that the people there were so wishful for it, but that it would be so gratifying to many of my friends in Norfolk, and that I might be the instrument of so much good to the cause of God?

Still, after all, I admit that there was “a former period of *disturbance* in the county,” and especially in Norwich. It occurred in 1839, and that same year was brought before the Conference held in Liverpool. To this I suppose you must refer, as I know of no other “disturbance” in the county of Norfolk “at a former period” to which you can, by possibility allude, with which I am at all personally concerned. But if there be any other, state it plainly and if God permit, I will duly notice it.

But you have rendered it necessary, I conceive, that I



should now truly and fully state that "former period of disturbance in the county." For while the painful "disturbance" has a momentous bearing on my history as a Wesleyan minister and on the history of Methodism in the county of Norfolk, it involves such matters as deserve the serious attention of our whole connexion.

I will proceed to point out the occasion of the "disturbance" and the way in which it was manifested.

In the year 1839, a measure was brought forward in the House of Commons, by Lord John Russell, on the subject of National Education. The pressing necessity of some Parliamentary measure on the subject, no intelligent and reflecting Briton, I presume would deny. For after all that had been so nobly accomplished by Sunday Schools, and other means of instruction, both by the Established church and other churches in the land, an appalling mass of ignorance and vice prevailed. Many of our prisons were thronged with juvenile offenders whose crimes and wretchedness were truly deplorable, and saying as with a voice of thunder "for a soul to be without knowledge is not good," for domestic honour, order and comfort, for the security of property, or the peace of the community, or for the stability and improvement of our national institutions,—but above all, in relation to eternity. For had the same "spirit that passed before the face of Eliphaz the Temanite, which made all his bones shake and the hair of his flesh stand up," appeared again even in favoured England in the 19th century, and reported in what state many every year, every month, every week pass out of our christian country into the eternal world, is it not to be feared, that his report in two of its awful items more than three thousand years ago, would still to a great extent be the same, "they perish for ever without any regarding it," "they die even without wisdom?"

Now the Educational Measure, brought into the House of Commons by his Lordship, I thought did great honour to him and the government with which he was so prominently and usefully connected. I hailed it with delight, as did the late Rev. Thomas Galland, as calculated by the blessing of God to be exceedingly beneficial to our vast and ever increasing population. And at this moment I cannot but say in the language of our excellent Dr. Dixon, "it was by far the best government measure that we have yet had on the subject." But our Committee of Privileges in London got up an opposition to it.

Forms of petitions against it were sent to all our ministers throughout the kingdom. And because among other reasons its benefits were to be extended to poor Roman Catholic children, the old "no popery" cry was loudly, and in my opinion, ungenerously and unwisely raised to defeat the patriotic scheme. I at once avowed my disapproval of the opposition, refused to sign the petition, or take any part, in what I viewed as a connexional movement, which would procure neither honour nor advantage to ourselves, nor our country, but do incalculable mischief.

Many of our well-informed office-bearers and people in Norwich were like myself, decidedly in favour of the government scheme. Some were even urgent to get up a petition in favour of it. And had that been done, I have no doubt but it would have been far more numerously signed than the other. But to preserve the peace of the society, I persuaded our friends to drop the project of getting up a second petition. When on the Sabbath day, my superintendent, had very much shortened the forenoon service at St. Peter's chapel to explain and recommend the petition against the government scheme, he hastened in the circuit gig to our Calvert Street chapel for the same purpose, and reached it before I had closed the service. These operations certainly caused some little disturbance in interrupting the service of God, but no "great injury to Methodism."

Mr. Constable, my superintendent, whom I sincerely loved for the excellencies that adorned his character, told me that my refusing to sign the petition and so pointedly condemning the movement would damage me, he feared, at the Conference. "What" said I, "damage me at the Conference" for exercising the right of private judgment, and using my privilege as a British subject, in such an unobjectionable way and in a matter of such national importance? Surely such a thing cannot be.

I will now relate *how* the "disturbance" if such you will call it, came under the notice of the Conference in Liverpool 1839.

I had been invited by our friends in the Bradford East circuit, to be their superintendent, and I had accepted their invitation in the usual manner.

But in the Stationing Committee, I was put down as *second preacher* for *Newark*. At Newark, as compared to Bradford, while my income would have been less, my ministerial status

would have been lowered. On my arrival in Liverpool, I was met by some of the Stewards from the Bradford East circuit, who expressed their deep regret at my not being appointed to them according to their wishes and official request. But they had waited on some of the leading ministers, who told them they *could not have me* as there was "something against me." I told them that I knew no more than they what that "something" was to which the "leading ministers" did or could refer, but I would try to learn it and then inform them.

At the annual examination, when the usual question was put before the Conference, "any objection against brother Rowland?" the answer was "*none*." "Such" said I "Mr. President thank God, has always been the answer in my case during all the years that I have been in our ministry." But referring to the statement made by the Stewards of the Bradford East circuit, it "appears that there is after all "something" against me, and "something" so serious that I cannot be appointed to that circuit, as asserted by certain "leading ministers." I therefore requested a Committee might meet on the subject to save the time of the Conference, and to afford a better opportunity for the fullest investigation into my character and conduct, as I felt anxious to stand well with my fathers and brethren in the ministry. What made me the more urgent to get a Committee was, because at a former Conference when I expressed in a few respectful and moderate terms, my disapproval of what had been done in the Leeds organ case, the Rev. John Stephens in his own solemn tone and emphasis said on the platform, "Brother Rowland you are from this time a marked man." And none in that venerable assembly of ministers uttered the slightest remark on this offensive language of the Ex-President. But privately the late Rev. A. F. Farrar deplored to a member of my family the damage I had sustained on the occasion.

Besides, the Rev. T. Lessey, who was elected the President in 1839, had stated to a few friends in Norwich only a few weeks before, "that he was exceedingly sorry for me, because I was suffering, and should continue to suffer, in consequence of my brother, Mr. David Rowland in Dr. Warren's affair."

Now did not you, Mr. S. Jackson, expel him from our church because of what you considered his violation of our Wesleyan discipline, in opposition to the declared wishes and



judgment of a large majority of the leaders' meeting where he was tried, though not the smallest stain rested on his moral character? Was there not also a dishonourable attempt made by a certain party in Liverpool to deprive him of his situation as a clerk of the Bootle Water Works by a false and base representation, but which signally failed?

But, if according to Mr. Lessey, I was suffering through my brother David's proceedings, I thought it important to have a Committee to ascertain if there were in those proceedings "a something against me" involved, especially as the "leading ministers" who had made such a painful statement to the Bradford Stewards, were silent about it when my character was under examination before the Conference. And further, I considered that as those "leading ministers" had told the Bradford Stewards, I could not go to their circuit because "there was something against me," they might make the same damaging statement and for a similar purpose to the stewards of Grosvenor Street circuit Manchester, the Hull, Nottingham, Sunderland, or several of the London circuits, to all which at different times I had been invited. Above all, I was impressed with what Mr. Constable my superintendent and representative, had told me about my being damaged for refusing to sign the petition against the government scheme of education.

After some opposition, a Committee was granted, consisting of Messrs. Reece, Marsden, Treffry, senior, and Joseph Taylor, all of whom were Ex-Presidents, and two of whom had been my superintendents. I met them at the house of the late Rev. John Anderson. In conversing with them, I stated that two of them, Messrs. Reece and Marsden, had known me from my youth up—that though in the Conference it had always been declared there was no objection against me, yet I had really and earnestly desired them to meet me to put any question to me they thought proper, and that there might be the fullest investigation, so that, if there were "something against me," for which I could not be appointed to the Bradford East circuit, as mentioned to the Stewards by "certain leading ministers," I might know what that "something" was, that I might be set quite right with my brethren. A few questions were put to me in the kindest manner, and which I answered with the utmost frankness. Mr. Taylor spoke of my character and conduct in terms of high commendation! I retired and they remained a few



minutes to deliberate on their decision. With what solicitude did I wait the issue, so deeply interesting to my ministerial status and reputation. At length, the Committee appeared and ascended the platform. Mr. Reece rose as the chairman to give the report, which he did with his usual dignity of manner and clearness of language, and in substance as follows :

“ Mr. President, the Committee have had a meeting with brother Rowland. He was frank and open in his communications, and the Committee are unanimously of opinion that brother Rowland ought to have a circuit according to his wishes.” Thus their report did more than simply declare that there was not something against me, in so speaking of my appointment to a circuit. I said my wishes were to go to the Bradford East circuit as invited, and I sat down with my mind relieved of a sad burden of care, thinking with gladness, now shall I stand right with my brethren. But my gladness was soon turned to grief and painful surprise.

For Dr. Newton, the Secretary of the Conference, proceeded to ask 1st. “ Is it not a fact that brother Rowland in making a public collection, called it the poor man’s collection; as if he were more a poor man’s friend than his brother ministers ?” This referred to what had happened five years before, at the opening of our new chapel at Peckham. On that occasion, Dr. Beaumont preached on the Sabbath morning, Dr. Bunting in the evening and I in the afternoon. It is well known that our congregations in and about London, in an afternoon chiefly consist of servants and poor people. In allusion to that circumstance alone, I used the words “ poor man’s collection ;” adding, “ if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.” The late Mr. Frid, when the money was counted in the vestry remarked, the phrase “ poor man’s collection,” was a capital hit, for the amount collected this afternoon is equal to that in the morning. The meaning attached to my words in the Secretary’s question had never entered my mind, nor as I believe the minds of the congregation ; *and never had I heard of it till that moment.* Yet Dr. Bunting said, “ that to use such a phrase was very unfortunate in these days of chartism.”

2nd. The Secretary then enquired, “ has not brother Rowland complained of his being a deeply injured man ?” True. And not without reason. For at the Sheffield Confer-

ence in 1828 I could not attend, as my ministerial duties required my being at home in Liverpool to attend to my circuit. In my absence, a dialogue occurred in that Conference, as I was informed by a minister there, to the following effect: "Was not Mr. James Spicer of London, a few weeks since in Liverpool?" "Yes." "Did he lodge at the Saddle Inn?" "No." "Did he lodge at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool?" "No, but at the sign of the Rowland, next door to Leeds Street chapel." The Rev. John Bowers referring to this affair, told me that in his opinion "it had deeply injured me."

It is a fact that a few weeks before the Sheffield Conference in 1828, Mr. Spicer came to Liverpool on business, and for one night he lodged at my house adjoining our Leeds Street chapel. After his departure, it was discovered that he had circulated among our people, the printed resolutions passed by the office-bearers in the Southwark circuit, condemnatory of the Conference proceedings in the Leeds organ case. This gave such offence in certain quarters, that he was called a "religious incendiary," and I was severely censured in various private circles for harbouring him under my roof. But little did I expect that he would be held up before the Conference, where he could not be admitted to defend himself against the ridicule and scorn there exhibited, and that for being his host, I should receive such "deep injury." I took an early opportunity to call on Dr. Bunting, then stationed in the Irwell Street circuit, Manchester, and indignantly complained to him of this proceeding in the Conference, as unworthy of such an assembly, unfair to an absent brother minister, and as being an unconstitutional and unchristian attack on Mr. Spicer, then a respectable class leader in London, a trustee of our Southwark chapel, and who with his family had long treated with kind hospitality many of our ministers in London as well as myself. But as this painful affair had happened more than two years before, I had almost forgotten it and my complaining too, when I was so unexpectedly reminded of both by Dr. Newton's second question.

The third question asked by Dr. Newton was, "Did not brother Rowland allow himself to be called the man of the people?" I will explain. A few weeks before the Conference a public Breakfast Meeting had been held in Norwich, connected with the Anniversary of the London Missionary society in that city. There my honoured and truly honourable friend the Rev. John Alexander, whose "praise is in all the

churches," expressed his regret that the three years of my appointment to the Norwich circuit were nearly terminated, and if it would be proper, he would gladly write a letter to the coming Conference, requesting I might remain three years longer, as I had always so kindly and usefully united with him and other ministers in promoting various and important institutions of piety and mercy. The Rev. W. Brock, with his characteristic kindness of heart and suavity of manner, expressed his readiness to second Mr. Alexander's proposition and for the same reasons. Some allusion was also made to the circumstance of my coincidence with the views of most present, on the recent government scheme of education. After hearing these things, Dr. Hamilton of Leeds, one of the deputation, in substance said, "I am glad to think if Norfolk is about to lose Mr. Rowland, Yorkshire will gain him, as I understand he is invited to Bradford, where he will be my near neighbour, and where such a man of the people is wanted," or words to that effect.

If the Rev. Thomas Cutting who was present at the meeting, was Dr. Newton's informer, to him I appeal as to the truth of my statement, as well as to the Rev. John Alexander of Norwich, and the Rev. W. Brock now of London.

To Dr. Hamilton I cannot appeal, for he is gone to his reward. But O Hamilton, thou servant of the living God, if it were possible, wouldst thou not weep even in heaven to find how thy friendly words were turned to my disadvantage at our Wesleyan Conference? If thou couldst revisit our earth, with thy splendid pen and eloquent tongue, that were formerly so nobly employed to benefit thy country, the church of Christ and the world, and that have won for thee such an immortal name, rising above sectarian partiality and prejudice, how wouldst thou put forth thy lofty powers, to heal the wounds of our torn and agitated Wesleyan Zion, how earnestly wouldst thou inspire her with the spirit, and array her with the glory of a true Evangelical Alliance?

Dr. Newton having sat down, a fourth question was put to the Conference by the Rev. Jos. Cusworth. It was, "Did not brother Rowland refuse to sign our connexional Petition against the Government Scheme of Education? And was there not through him great disturbance in Norwich on the occasion?" Mr. Constable replied that "Mr. Rowland did refuse to sign the Petition though I urged him to do it, and there was some disturbance in Norwich, but there was no



evidence that Mr. Rowland caused it." Now I have reason to know that this fourth question was adduced as involving my greatest offence against "certain leading ministers in the Conference," and the "something" for which, as they had told the Bradford Stewards, I could not be sent to their Circuit,—only had this question alone have been put, the purpose would not have been so well served.

I instantly rose in the Conference to answer these extraordinary and vexatious questions. But I had uttered only a few words, relating to the first of them, when a rush of blood to my head, caused by intense excitement seemed to threaten with fatal consequences if I proceeded, so I sat down abruptly in agonizing grief and sickness.

Perhaps this statement may be considered by the Rev. Wm. Barton, who at the late Conference described me as "an amiable but weak brother," as furnishing strong evidence of my weakness. Be it so. But you know who hath said "Oppression maketh a wise man mad."

Now if these four questions had been proposed at a Stationing Committee by some influential individual with a certain wink of the eye, a significant shrug of the shoulders, a certain nod of the head, or with an emphatic tone of voice, they would have had the most withering effect on my character in my absence, and would have been sure to affect my appointment to a Circuit. And will you, Mr. Jackson, affirm that these very questions had not been proposed there? but why were they not brought forward when my character was under examination before the Conference? or why were they not sent to my Committee?

But for the Committee and its "recommendation that I should have a Circuit according to my wishes," I might perhaps have been kept in the dark to this day concerning those vexatious questions.

The fourth question relating to my refusing to sign at Norwich, the Petition against the Government Scheme of Education was to me the more offensive because from a letter which I had received from the late Rev. Thos. Galland, and from other quarters, I had learnt that some of the most active and influential promoters of that petition were the most zealous for the overthrow of the then existing but weakened Whig Ministry, and that they confidently expected our Connexional movement would hasten the events which they so much desired.



As to the substantial truth and correctness of my statement of this painful affair, I appeal to all the ministers who were present at the Liverpool Conference in 1839, and observant of all its proceedings. If in one word or circumstance, it be inaccurate, let the inaccuracy be pointed out, and I will gladly and promptly correct it. But if my statement be substantially correct, then, I think it must be manifest to others, if not to the conductors of the "Vindicator," that you must have been mistaken in representing me as "an instrument of great injury to Methodism in Norfolk in a former disturbance," but that I was rather the *victim* than the *instrument* of "great injury."

It is true, that after all, I was appointed to the Bradford East Circuit, but neither according to the people's invitation, nor according to my wishes as had been unanimously recommended by the venerable Committee of Ex-Presidents. For I was placed under a junior minister who was made my superintendent. And I went to my new scene of ministerial care and toil, through these vexatious proceedings at the Conference, with what I felt to be a sword in my inmost soul, and a brand on my back of unmerited degradation.

At that same Liverpool Conference in 1839, when a protest from Mr. Bromley was brought forward against the Rules of 1835, I stated, in my place, that I did not protest against those Rules, but against their *abuse*. Alas! little did I then foresee what mischief would result from the mal-administration of them, and that my esteemed friend, Mr. Bromley, would be found among the expelled. His respectable abilities as a writer none can deny, his eloquence as a preacher, and extraordinary efficiency as a platform orator, thousands have admired, and been greatly blest under their powerful operation, accompanied by the Holy Spirit, and his urbanity and winning manners in private life, have won the warmest affections of those who have best known him.

But now I do think, that the application of the Rules of 1835 in the four vexatious questions which I have mentioned, and in the expulsion of so many pious and useful ministers and office-bearers which has recently occurred, is unwise and revolting. And if we cannot have those Rules without subjecting our Connexion to such outrages and damaging abuse of them, then, the sooner they are swept away the better.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The final Sentence of the Conference on my case.—1. That I should make an apology—2. Be removed from Yarmouth—3. Put out of the Superintendency of a Circuit—4. Be deemed ineligible to be in a Minor District—5. Be admonished from the Chair—6. Be made a Supernumerary—and 7. Be removed from the Norfolk District.*

The last but not the least matter in your “Vindicator” which claims my serious attention is, the Sentence pronounced against me by the Conference, containing seven memorable particulars.

1st. “That he should apologise to the Conference for the manner in which he had reflected upon its disciplinary acts.”

This, according to Dr. Bunting meant, “that I should express my regret to the Conference for my unjustifiable reflections on its decisions last year—and that what I ought to apologise for was that I had declared my censure of the proceedings of the last Conference in such strong and offensive language.” In this explanation of the apology required, most present appeared to agree, and the President said “he felt anxious to impress Mr. Rowland’s mind with the view just set before him by Dr. Bunting.”

Here I remark, considering that “in many things we offend all,” I think we should be ready on all fitting occasions, not only to acknowledge our sins to God, but also to “confess our faults one to another.”

And at the Conference in 1849, I spontaneously uttered what Mr. W. M. Bunting called a “Penitential Confession.” It was to this effect, “that I for one was inclined to take to myself shame and confusion of face before God. For had I been more holy in heart and life, had I preached the gospel more wisely, faithfully, plainly, affectionately and zealously, and had I been more diligent and persevering in the discharge of pastoral duties, things among us, might not have been so bad as we, alas! found them. O when we look at the state of our Connexion, at the state of our country, and at the state of the world, how much it behoved us to end our discord, and to unite hand in hand, and heart in heart, as a holy brotherhood, and a bond of love, combined to labour for our mutual good, and the salvation of immortal souls. More than forty years have rolled away since on that spot (pointing to a particular part of Oldham Street Chapel where we were then

assembled) I was led by the word and spirit of God, and the ministry of Dr. Bunting, for whom I had always a particular love and respect, to give myself to the Lord and to his church, and to vow to be the Lord's servant fully and for ever.

"High heaven that heard the solemn vow,"  
That vow renewed shall daily hear,  
Till in life's latest hour, I bow,  
And bless in death a bond so dear."

Little did I expect when I addressed the above sentiments, that twelve months afterwards, I should hear Mr. W. M. Bunting state in City Road Chapel, London, "that Mr. Rowland's case was not a little aggravated by the manner in which he had proceeded. It was particularly ungraceful in a man twelve months after he had made a *'penitential confession'* before the Conference, to avow his present sentiments."

But Mr. Bunting did not point out any sentiments uttered by me in the Conference in 1850, at all "ungraceful" or inconsistent with my "penitential confession" in the former Conference, nor could he do so. And if it was graceful in me to make a right apology, or "penitential confession" in one place, I see nothing ungraceful in refusing in another place to make what I consider to be an *improper* apology. Besides would not my "penitential confession" to a great extent have been very becoming both in Mr. Bunting and many more of our ministers; and if rightly made under the influence of the Holy Spirit, might it not have had a blessed effect on them and on our Zion?

On the occasion referred to by Mr. Bunting, I expressed my sincere regret at the injustice which had been done to his honoured father by certain of his opponents. But I must now with pain acknowledge, that my grateful esteem and profound respect for Dr. Bunting have at times sealed my lips in the Conference, when I felt I ought to speak out against some of its proceedings which he has prominently advocated.

2nd. I remark that while the Conference is right in urging on all its members a practical and constant attention to such scriptural duties as, "Honour to whom honour is due," "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility," still these duties have their proper limits. They must not be so urged as to touch on the honour which belongs to Him who is "jealous of his honour, and who will not give his glory to another." They must not be urged so as to reverse the order, or principle that "we ought to obey God rather than men."

Now suppose that Dr. Bunting, the President, and others among us, consider that for me to think and say that the Conference in 1849, "unintentionally violated our Laws," was to utter "unjustifiable reflections on its decisions," because we neither *did* nor *could* commit any error in the affair, and therefore required me to acquiesce in this doctrine. I should certainly object to it as being inconsistent with the "Penitential Confession," made by themselves in City Road Chapel, every Sabbath in public worship, before God and his people, in saying "We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep." For while sheep are clean and harmless, they are remarkable for being silly and prone to error. And let one of them be more bold and influential than the rest, and he is sure to be followed as their leader, right or wrong, and through him they may wander till they are lost on the dark mountains. Now the eternal spirit of truth is always consistent with himself. And if we rightly follow him in making the "penitential confession" just named, we shall the better follow him as preachers of the gospel, under shepherds of the flock, and ambassadors of Christ. But while on the Sabbath we confess that, "we have erred and strayed like lost sheep," we should not the next day speak and act as if either individually or collectively we were incapable of error, as this would indicate that we are "clothed, rather with pride than with humility."

Again, such doctrine would contradict the 21st Article of the Established Church, which says, that General Councils "may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God." But if General Councils may err, our Conference may err "even in things pertaining to God." At the county meeting of Devon, on the Papal Aggression, it was asserted by the Rev. Mr. Hatchard, that one cause of the Aggression was the claim of infallibility for the establishment. Archbishop Whateley, in his work on the Errors of Romanism in the way of just rebuke says, "The Church of Rome claims to be infallible, and our Protestant Churches maintain that they *can never do wrong*."

3rd. Such doctrine, I think, would be plainly at variance with the Minutes of 1744, which I have before adduced, and the principles there avowed, which Mr. Myles says "formed the basis of the Methodist Conference."

Those principles are recorded in the edition of 1744 in my possession. But what was my painful astonishment a few



days since, in searching the edition of Mr. Wesley's Works, by the Rev. Thos. Jackson, published in 1831, at finding the invaluable article concerning the right of private judgment containing the "principles that formed the basis of the Methodist Conference," entirely omitted. How was this? Was it an oversight or by design? An explicit and speedy answer to this momentuous question is due both to our ministers and people.

"The days are past when a majority would impose silence or enforce conviction on the minority, or a single individual. The right of private judgment on which our Church is founded is not a weapon to be used only against the Roman Catholic, and to be thrown aside the moment we apply ourselves to regulate the doctrine and discipline of our Church." Vide the London Daily Times on the Revival of Convocation.

To return to our subject. It is not without some reason, that I have put hypothetically, before you, the above doctrine with the three objections to it. For, when on my Trial, I spoke against the required apology, Mr. I. Keeling observed that "Mr. Rowland was twisting the Conference as if it were an individual." Now certainly, I had at the time no intention of so twisting the Conference. Far otherwise. I frankly own that I owe an honour to the Conference as such, that does not belong to any single member of it. But if one Member of the Conference "may err and stray like lost sheep," so may five hundred or a thousand; and five hundred or a thousand fallibles, would not, could not make one infallible assembly.

Once more. *In my view the apology demanded by the Conference, I ought not to give.* Not because of some pecuniary obligations I was under to Mr. Hardy, as has been falsely and basely insinuated. Not because I was committed to the Reform party in our Connexion as asserted by Mr. Waddy. When I demanded proof of his bold assertion, you may recollect, he stated that some of the principles in my nine Reasons were advocated by that party. My reply then was and still is, that a number of pious and enlightened ministers both in the Established Church and among the Nonconformists have expressed to me their cordial approval both of the principles in the nine reasons and of the conduct which I have pursued in the trying affair. Did it therefore follow that I was committed to any or all of those ministers? How unwarrantable then for Mr. Waddy to assert, that I could not

make the apology, as I was committed to that party because it advocates some of my principles ?

Nor did I refuse to make the apology, out of *revenge* as affirmed by Mr. E. Walker, for great as was the wrong inflicted on me, yet I have not so learned Christ as to indulge and practice revenge, but to "return good for evil."

But I refused to apologize because according to your own showing I had already *once* apologised, for you say that I was requested to repeat it "that the Conference might judge whether it was sufficient." I had *before* spontaneously expressed positive regret at certain words in my eighth reason, as conveying a censure of the proceedings of the Conference in "language too strong and offensive," the very thing demanded in the apology as explained by Dr. Bunting. I had *before* declared that I wished not to stickle for words, that as the words "do the penitent" were particularly objected to, I would not use them again, but I must stand by my *principles*. Now *one* apology for *one* offence ought to have been deemed sufficient, and especially such a one as I had given. But if that one were not sufficient, then two or three more, if I had given them, might have been complained of as not sufficient.

2nd. I refused the apology, because the language in my document complained of was used, not in a public meeting to a promiscuous assembly, nor even to a company of laity belonging to our own society, but to four brother ministers in a Minor District Meeting, without any expectation at the time that it would be published elsewhere. It was not intended to cast any improper reflection on the Conference, but to show my opinion when it was called for by the chairman, and the grounds on which I had formed it in relation to an important matter, involving what I know might lead to the expulsion from our church of two sincere christians and useful office-bearers. To demand therefore the apology for my opinion so given, I think was a sad invasion of the right of private judgment, a deplorable infringement of "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and calculated to lower our ministers in self respect and in the eyes of our people. For after such a demand, what confidence can our people have in a Minor District Meeting ? Will they not say that Dr. Dixon's observation is too true, "that the ministers are likely to decide in favour of themselves ?" How can a free, unbiased judgment be expected in that court, composed of Five minis-

ters, when any one of them is liable to be required to *apologise* for honestly giving his conscientious opinion, yea, may be degraded and punished as I have been? Will not our laity be led to think, that if in a Minor District Meeting a minister be a *zealous expeller*, especially of such as are called Reformers, that he is on the way to ecclesiastical promotion? and on the contrary, if a minister be not such a *zealous expeller*, that he is likely to fare the worse at the Conference?

3rd. I properly refused the apology, I think, because while one in the Conference was considered as making it *too small* by soft words. others considered, me at least, as making it *too large*. Thus, Mr. Tabraham "enquired whether it would not meet the case if Mr. Rowland would say that he had used language which he could not now justify, and that he was sorry for having used it." The next preacher, Mr. Prest, said, "he did not suppose that the Conference was prepared to take the least apology that Mr. Rowland thought proper to offer." As I did not wish to favour those who advocated a large apology more than those who pleaded for a small one, was it not prudent for me to decline offering any in addition to that which I had already given?

4th. The apology demanded, actually required me to "express regret to the Conference for unjustifiable reflections on its decisions last year, in its disciplinary acts." Now how could I, as a christian minister, "express" such "regret" when I did not *feel it*, and when I was fully persuaded in my own mind, that I cast no "unjustifiable reflections" in my nine reasons adduced in the Minor District Meeting. Had I uttered the expresion demanded by the Conference, I believe I should have acted the part of a liar and a hypocrite, in avowing what I did not mean. To that I could not consent.

"For he that thinks one thing, and dare another tell,  
My soul abhors him as the gates of hell."

5th. Had the apology *not* involved a violation of principle, as I told the Conference, if their sentence had been drawn up with the design of rendering it impossible for me to make the apology, I know of nothing more calculated to have effected that purpose. And yet I was called upon, as I viewed it, to say in effect by making the apology, "the sentence is quite just, I deserve it all," when every dictate of my mind, and every feeling of my heart denounced it as being most unrighteous and cruel. All things considered, so unjust and astoundingly severe a sentence is not, in my opinion, to be found in all the annals of Methodism; and in relation to it, a Roman



Catholic Priest in Norfolk, I was told, declared "if you will search the whole history of our church you will find nothing so bad."

I cannot account for this tremendous sentence being passed in the Conference, but on the supposition, that there must have been in that holy and venerable assembly, too much of the leaven of popery, to allow any one of its members to dare to avow his opinion that that assembly was, it not only *might*, but *did* err, and "unintentionally violate its own laws," in the expulsion of the three ministers.

2nd. The sentence included my removal from the Yarmouth circuit. This you leave out in your Vindicator. Yet to me the leaving a people with whom I have often joined in publicly worshipping God in his sanctuary, and also in domestic prayer, and with whom I have enjoyed holy and delightful intercourse, has always more or less been marked with sacred sorrow, perhaps not unlike that which was more remarkably manifested at Miletus, when the elders from Ephesus "all wept sore and fell on Paul's neck." But in this instance, my being driven away from my circuit in ecclesiastical degradation, was to me, my family, and my friends unusually painful. So I felt it, as I cast a farewell look on my home, on our beautiful chapel, and on the weeping face of many a kind friend. This event filled many of our oldest and best office-bearers and members with pain and grief. Their unanimous request and earnest wishes for the continuance of my services among them for another year, were treated, as they thought, as unworthy of the notice of the Conference. With an existing circuit debt they are put to an additional, unnecessary expence, in consequence of what they deem my unrighteous removal.

My successor, by this proceeding, has been put into a perplexing and trying situation. If I am not mistaken, some of his allowance or income is unpaid. The circuit debt is increasing. Many are stopping the supplies. Does he expostulate? he is emphatically told, why complain, you came among us uninvited and undesired. We did not send for you. Mr. Rowland is the pastor of our choice, but he was unrighteously sent away, despite of all our remonstrances. Does he exercise discipline? Its results are saddening. For though this Wesleyan pastor, of whom I would speak with respect and affection, (I here simply state a fact,) this stranger that arrived in the place only a few weeks ago, and who, in a year



or two at the farthest, will be gone and may be no more seen there, some of the elders of the church of twenty, thirty, or forty years standing, who have been nobly devoting their influence, time, prayers and money, in support of Methodism, are put out of their offices, if not out of the society, exciting in many indignation and shame, and filling numbers of once happy dwellings, with "lamentation, mourning and woe," yea, an anguish of soul even surpassing that produced by the anguish of death.

Was the pastor considered the better qualified for his new circuit on account of his expelling operations in his former one? If this was known by the Conference who sent him, it is soon known by the people to whom he is sent, for the news swiftly flies from circuit to circuit, through various channels.

Speak to many of our office-bearers at Yarmouth on the subject of my removal, and they will point you to Lynn, Spitalfields, Edinburgh, Bristol, York and other places, saying, "had Mr. Rowland have carried on the awful work of expulsions as it was effected there, he would probably have remained among us." And what heart-rending scenes do you now witness? Alas! in Yarmouth, "the ways of Zion mourn, she weepeth sore in the night. And her tears are on her cheeks."

3rd "That he be admonished from the chair." Was this done? You assert that "Mr. Rowland was admonished from the chair." But strange as it may appear, even in this particular, you are quite mistaken. For I affirm that I was not admonished from the chair, and I appeal to the President himself as a witness to the truth of my affirmation, and the mistake of your assertion. But why was I not admonished from the chair? If the President considered that I was punished with more than sufficient severity, without my being subjected to the admonition, I cordially agree with him. Yet though he omitted to give me the admonition, and I declined to make the required apology, still, I desire that we may not be blamed for our conduct in this particular, as we did it not in a spirit of disobedience to the authority of the Conference, which we both so highly respect and esteem.

4th. "That he should be declared incapable of taking the superintendency of a circuit whilst he retained his present views." Now my "present views" concerning the doctrines and discipline of our church, to which I suppose you must here refer, are precisely the same as they have always been

during the thirty seven years I have been in the ministry. I am not conscious of the slightest change. If the Conference knew that any of my views were either unscriptural, or un-Wesleyan, how is it that up to the very last annual assembly in 1850, it had officially, and constantly declared that there was no "objection against me?" Have I not been faithfully examined concerning "my views" twice a year, ever since I became a Wesleyan Minister? Did the Committee of ex-Presidents, convened *at my earnest request* for a particular and full investigation, at the Conference in 1839, in Liverpool, report any thing unfavourable about "my views?" Was there a single instance of any thing wrong in "my views" clearly proved at the last Conference, or would such a complaint have been *insinuated*, much less boldly asserted in the last September Vindicator, if I had made the required apology? I think not.

At the Conference in 1845, was I not by certain of our ministers highly eulogised on account of my *superintendency*, and the improvement of the Rochdale circuit? And yet "my views" then were just the same as in City Road Chapel last August.

At the Bristol Conference in 1846, is it not a fact, that though I stated to the Conference my desire to go as *second preacher* to the Birmingham East circuit, to which I had been appointed by the Stationing Committee, yet Dr. Bunting observed such had been the manner and success of my superintendency, that I must be put as the superintendent in whatever circuit I might be stationed?" In consequence of this, was I not then proposed to superintend the Rotherham circuit, and as an argument to win my consent, was I not told by Mr. Atherton the ex-President, and Dr. Newton, that they had both been stationed there, and it was one of the best circuits in the connexion, and by the Rev. A. E. Farrar, that the Rotherham circuit wished to have me among them? But owing to a circumstance, in which I afterwards found I was quite mistaken, I felt quite averse to that appointment, and as the Rev. W. Kelk did not wish to go to the Stockport South circuit, at my suggestion he went to Rotherham and I to Stockport. But though at that Conference I felt myself honoured and gratified in being proposed for the "superintendency" of the Rotherham circuit; yet "my views" were then exactly the same as at the Conference of 1850.

At the Conference in 1849, one argument used to induce

me to "take the superintendency" of the Yarmouth circuit was, as previously stated, that "our Yarmouth friends so much wished it." In 1850, though their wishes were far more general and earnest than in 1849, they were not met, but painfully disappointed in my removal.

5th. "That he should not be allowed to take any part, as a member of a Minor District Meeting."

When I earnestly requested to be exempt from being made a member of the Minor District Meeting in the case of Messrs. Hardy and Colman, my request was not granted. But being placed in that Meeting, I was resolved to do my duty faithfully, and leave consequences with God. And now, though not "allowed to take part, as a member," and as a supposed punishment, yet this circumstance does not, and cannot deprive me of the approval of my conscience and the smile of my Maker.

But think you not, that were my ministerial brethren again to "allow me to take part as a member of a Minor District Meeting," it would, at present be very undesirable for me to allow myself to take that honour? For I cannot agree to the strange doctrine which seems to be getting fashionable in our connexion, that a man may be "a good christian and yet be a bad Methodist." No doubt those of our ministers who hold this doctrine are the most eligible for a Minor District Meeting, and perhaps most likely to be made members of it, especially where a Wesleyan Reformer is to be tried. For now the more a pastor's mind among us is imbued with this dangerous doctrine, and the less scruple he is expected to have in bringing about the expulsion of certain reform offenders, though they may have been sincerely converted to God under our own ministry, have cordially embraced our system in all its spiritual principles of doctrine and discipline for a quarter or even half a century officially and extensively supported Methodism in all its interests, the more suitable will he be considered for the work of excision. But suppose a reform offender, who is expelled from our church without any stain upon his "moral character;" still feels church fellowship to be a duty and privilege, and applies for admission into some other church. He frankly avows that he differs less in opinion with the church from which he has been driven, than with the one to which he applies for admission. He is told, "you may be a good christian," but after hearing your avowal, we think,



you would not make a good church-of-England-man, Baptist, or Independent, Presbyterian, or member of our Protestant church whatever it may be, so we must decline your offer to unite with us." Being thus cast out of his own church, and rejected by other Protestant churches, what is he to do? The Romanist tells him, our church is the only true, Catholic one in which salvation is to be found. But while on certain points he differs in his opinion from the Protestant churches that reject him, he cannot, will not join the church of Rome. Thus he is shut out of the church on earth, through his own Wesleyan pastor expelling him in accordance with the doctrine "you may be a good christian, but a bad Methodist." So that, while the Lord and Master says to this "good christian," this child of God, "Son go work in my vineyard," (that is my church) here is a pastor, a fallible servant says, "Go out of the vineyard," work if you like, but it must not be within the sacred enclosure of Zion, but outside of it." As a "good christian," he must, he does still work in secret devotion, family prayer, public worship, and in the faithful discharge of every personal and relative duty, and in promoting institutions of mercy and piety; yea, "he works out his salvation with fear and trembling, God working in him to will and to do of his good pleasure." Yet there he is working outside of the vineyard, though a "good christian," exposed to the furious assaults of the wild boar of the wilderness, and ten thousand hostile influences, deprived by his own pastor of the guiding, guarding, inspiriting and consoling advantages of church fellowship. If it be right for a Wesleyan minister to put out of his church, one whom he pronounces to be a "good christian, but a bad Methodist," must it not be right for a minister of another church, or its members to refuse to admit the expelled individual, because he disagrees with them as to some peculiarities of their community, though his disagreement affects no essential principle. Should however, other churches backed by the opinion of the Protestant public, embrace with open arms the "good christian, but bad Methodist," on the only proper, legitimate and scriptural ground, that the Lord Jesus approves of the individual and will undoubtedly receive him as "a good christian" into the kingdom of heaven, then what an advantage we give such churches, at the expense of our Wesleyan Zion!

This is not all. The dangerous doctrine in question is



likely to lead to other evils. For I think it will furnish a very plausible pretext to certain lukewarm Wesleyans, too numerous, alas! in all our circuits, to withdraw from various classes, where they have been rather nominal than real members, seldom cheering their leaders with their company at the important, weekly meetings required by our Rules. For why should they continue to meet in class, for which perhaps they have never felt and manifested any cordial attachment, when a man may be "a good christian, but a bad Methodist!" If they have not been liberal and cheerful givers, they may, by withdrawing from their classes, save the money taken by the leaders at the weekly meetings, and by the preachers at the quarterly visitations, in addition to the contributions expected in March for the yearly collection, and in September for the "Worn out Ministers' Fund," and they are not likely to overlook this consideration. If on the contrary, they are liberal and cheerful contributors, they know that after their withdrawal, their contributions can still be continued and will give them influence with our ministers and people.

This doctrine I consider is calculated to induce numbers of our people when offended at some trivial circumstance or other, and "it must needs be that offence come," either to separate themselves from us and form themselves into distinct sects and parties without end, or content themselves like others that might be named who profess to belong to the church invisible or universal, but to no one section of it in particular. And why not? For if a man may be "a good christian, and a bad Methodist," or no Methodist at all, he may consequently be "a good christian" without being a member of any particular section of Christ's visible church.

This doctrine sounds the more strange from a Methodist minister, and in him appears the more inconsistent, when it is remembered that according to the noble minded Mr. Wesley, the design of Methodism was, not to form a separate church or sect, but to revive and spread scriptural christianity in the church of England, in which as noticed already, he remained a minister till his death, and also through the British empire and the world. But what if Mr. Wesley's diocesan, the Bishop of Oxford, had first said, "you are no doubt a good christian, but certainly you are in my opinion a bad churchman, and in this opinion I am confirmed from the writings of such excellent clergymen of the establishment, as

Mr. Church, Mr. Walker of Truro, Bishop Warburton, Bishop Gibson, and Bishop Lavington,"—and then secondly have expelled him from the church, would the church have been benefitted by such proceedings? But the Bishop of Oxford did not act a part so foolish. And you are aware of the fact, that when some distinguished personages were complaining in high quarters of Mr. Wesley's eccentric or uncanonical operations to save souls, and enquiring what was to be done with him, King George the III, that pious monarch, being present, replied "done with him? why make a bishop of him to be sure."

About 26 years ago, when I was stationed in London and resided at Camberwell, a baptist lady belonging to Dr. Ripon's church, and an independent lady belonging to Dr. Harris's church at Chesham, came to dwell near my house. They applied for admission into the class of which I was the leader. Before I consented I consulted with Mr. Reece, my superintendent, on the subject. He replied, "give each of them a copy of the rules of our society, and if they are willing to comply with them, by all means receive them. This, brother Rowland, is agreeable to good old Methodism. I know several pious persons at Highgate who are similarly situated to those ladies, and they are really excellent Methodists, though belonging to other churches." And in my opinion, the two ladies were among the best Methodists in our society at Walworth, where I left them on my removal to Liverpool. They never neglected the class for which they expressed the most lively and grateful attachment, regularly attended our ministry, received with us the Lord's Supper, liberally contributed to all our connexional funds, and what was best of all, they were eminently holy in their spirit and deportment. Thus though one was a baptist, and the other an independent, yet they were both good Methodists as well as good christians. Still, they both differed from our church in opinion on certain points of doctrine, form of church government and discipline. They were both Calvinists, believing in the final perseverance of elect christians. On the sacrament of baptism, one of them could not agree with us. Then as to a form of church government and discipline, they were decided congregationalists. But it may be said that they were sincerely pious, and kept your rules. True. And at the last Conference, I was not even charged with violating any of our Rules, much less proved guilty of it. But on account of an adverse opinion

which I had avowed in writing at Yarmouth, not on any point of doctrine or discipline, but concerning the administrative proceedings of the Conference of 1849, in the expulsion of the three ministers, and though that opinion was not gratuitously offered, but given when my judgment was called for in the case of Messrs. Hardy and Colman,—I was degraded and must not be “allowed to take any part, as a member, in a Minor District Meeting.”

Just look at the case of John Cutts Esq., a Reform Deligate of the Chesterfield circuit. He was tried by his peers in his own circuit, where a verdict of “Not Guilty” was given in his favour. Mr. Parker, the superintendent, then appeals to a Minor District Meeting which was convened, of which Mr. S. D. Waddy was the chairman. The Meeting reversed the decision of the Trustees and Leaders who had acquitted Mr. Cutts. After this, Mr. Parker immediately expelled Mr. Cutts from both office and membership. Mr. Cutts is a solicitor, and he announced his intention of taking the case into a civil court.

A few days subsequent to his expulsion, Mr. Cutts informs the public that he is “reinstated in his former position in the church, without having recourse to legal proceedings.” How is this? Surely the tremendous act of church discipline has had its desired effect on the culprit. The expense of time, trouble and money attendant on calling together the Minor District Meeting has not been in vain.

Mr. Cutts must now be changed—not into “a good christian,” for *that* he was before, as almost every one at Chesterfield knew and acknowledged; but also in the opinions of all concerned into a “good Methodist.” Is it so? Hear Mr. Cutts. Referring to his reinstatement, he says this has been done, “without the slightest compromise of principle on my part; leaving me in full possession of my views as a Reformer, and to act as circumstances may require.”

With this case before us, in connection with that of Messrs. Hardy and Colman and others in various circuits, what minister among us but must long to be “allowed to take some part, as a member of a Minor District Meeting,” when convened, or who among our intelligent and reflecting office-bearers, but must admire the fact, that after a meeting of Trustees and Leaders, has brought in a verdict of “Not Guilty,” in favour of a pious and useful Local Preacher and Trustee of many years standing, after their decision has been



reversed by a Minor District Meeting, then, the superintendent may proceed to expel that same Local Preacher and Trustee, and then, to crown the whole, the same pastor may put the expelled individual into his former position, as if his expulsion had been both illegal and unjust.

6th. The next item of my punishment mentioned in your Vindicator is, "That for the next year, he be made a supernumerary."

In addition to what I have already written on this point, I have to remark, that I still consider myself, to use your own words, as being "a Wesleyan Minister supported from the funds of the connexion." Hence as subordinate to higher motives, I have felt it my duty to "work while it is day," for our connexion, in preaching anniversary sermons when invited to do so by our ministers, preferring to labour in our pulpits for our own people, as opportunity offers. At the same time, being a member of the "Evangelical Alliance," in accordance with its catholic spirit and recommendation, I have preached for other ministers and churches, and have been delighted with their expression of fraternal affection. Immediately after my arrival in Leeds, I waited on the Rev. E. Walker, to be directed to a suitable class meeting, where I have since attended with pleasure, when I have not been engaged elsewhere. With Mr. Walker and his colleagues, I have felt glad to co-operate in preaching, giving tickets, and assisting in administering the Sacraments, though I have done so, but seldom, owing to numerous engagements.

7th. "That he be removed from the Norfolk District." On this point, I insert the following letters:

"To the Rev. J. Beecham, D. D., President of the Conference, and the assembled Ministers, City Road Chapel.

169, Southwark Bridge Road,

Rev. and dear Sirs,

August 17th, 1850.

As circumstances which I need not name, kept me from the Conference yesterday, and will do so to-day again, I hasten to write to you on a subject interesting to me and my family. If I mistake not the verbal message which brother Walsh brought me last Wednesday night, it was to the effect, "that the Conference ordered me, on my return home, to remove from Yarmouth and the Norwich District as quickly as possible." I wish to know what time is allowed me in this Conference's order, for my departure, for not having the slightest expectation of being sent away from my Circuit at



the end of one year, contrary to the unanimous invitation of the people, not one step has been taken to get ready for my removal. All my books and things are unpacked. If I go to reside at Merthyr-Tydvill, where the Stationing Committee have placed me, or to Leeds, London, Manchester, Liverpool, or Newcastle-on-Tyne, where different members of my family dwell, would any of these places be considered at a sufficient distance from the Norwich District? Would it not be a graceful appendage to the stern discipline which has been exercised towards me, if you were to permit me to continue in Yarmouth, or Norfolk for three months? For "mercy is twice blessed—it blesses him that gives, and him that takes." Such an act of grace might gratify my few friends in Norfolk, as well as my family.

If, after my removal from Norfolk, one of my friends there being sick or dying, should request me to visit him, will you allow me to comply with his request, and also, as a regular thing, to go into that County about once in twelve months? As you have, no doubt, stationed suitable ministers in all the Circuits in the Norwich District, who will feed and guard the flock of God under their care, do you suppose that any harm would be done by granting me the favour to reside in that District for only three months? Have I not always been a man of peace during the thirty-seven years that I have been in your ministry? Considering what painful excitement now prevails in that District on my account, is not your order for me to remove in such haste, likely to exasperate the people, and increase divisive agitation and pernicious party-spirit?

Will not some naturally be led to put a sad and mischievous construction on your stern order? Will they not represent it as proceeding from that same spirit which, in a former age, produced the "Five Mile Act," that forbade a Philip Henry to come within five miles of a City or Corporation Town, and which, under Louis the Fourteenth, banished so many Protestants from France? The Bishop of Exeter would probably have preferred to remove Mr. Gorham to the Shetland Isles, or to Jamaica, rather than station him in his own Diocese, but a higher authority than that of the Bishop has placed Mr. Gorham in the Vicarage of Bamford Speke. Would it not be well, Sirs, for the Conference to follow the better spirit and conduct of this higher authority, and mitigate the

sternness of the order as to my removal from the Norwich District in such haste? Waiting your reply,

I am, Rev. and dear Sirs,

Yours respectfully,

THOMAS ROWLAND."

To which the following reply was returned—

Wesleyan Conference,

August 17th, 1850.

Dear Brother,

The Conference has received your letter of this morning, and directs us in reply, to inform you, that the Conference desires you will remove from Yarmouth and the Norwich District, in time to allow your successor to enter upon his duties in the Circuit at the beginning of September, or whenever he shall deem it necessary.

The Conference does not wish to restrict you as to the place of your future residence, further than to say, that it has no objection to your living in London, Liverpool, or Manchester, but hopes that wherever your lot may fall, your course may be peaceful and comfortable.

The Conference also begs you will send early information as to the place you may choose to reside in, that it may be printed in the minutes. We remain, dear Brother,

On behalf of the Conference,

Yours truly,

The Rev. T. Rowland. JOHN BEECHAM, *President*.  
169, Southwark Bridge Road, JOHN HANNAH, *Secretary*."

You assert, p. 146, "Where his conduct had been so mischievous," referring to my conduct at Norfolk. To the notice which I have already taken of this assertion I add, that if you have based it on any statement given by Mr. S. Tindall or any Wesleyan minister in the District, let me tell you that if such a statement had been made in my presence at the Conference or any where else, I should have denounced it as a glaring untruth. And why in all justice, fairness or honour, did not you or some one, inform me of the matter in private, before you published it to the world, considering how much it is calculated to damage my ministerial character where I am unknown? Why did not Mr. Tindall especially, inform me of the matter when I wrote to him to enquire in what way and for what purpose the Yarmouth appointment would come before the Conference? How is it that to this day he has not answered my note?

You say, p. 147, "Mr. Rowland and his friends have de-

nounced this act of discipline as unjustly severe, and have endeavoured to represent the requirement of his removal from Norfolk as arbitrary and oppressive..”

Suppose that I and my friends have denounced the act that made me a supernumerary, “as unjustly severe,” and represented “the requirement of my removal from Norfolk as arbitrary and oppressive,” are we alone in uttering such a denouncement or representation? Where in all Norfolk, or the British empire, can you point to any news paper or periodical, that has taken up the matter, except your Vindicator or the Watchman, that has expressed a *contrary* denouncement or representation? Point out one periodical or news paper that has even attempted to justify or palliate this proceeding towards me, and I will show you fifty which have condemned it in the severest language.

But you state further, “It would be most unwarrantable and inconsistent for him to be supported in a county where, not only now, but also at a former period of disturbance. he has been the instrument of great injury to Methodism, and where his presence and influence would be likely to aid the unchristian efforts of those who employ themselves to promote strife and dissensions in the Societies.”

God grant, that these calumnious and mischievous words, may not injure the pious, precious souls, who are the fruit of my ministry, and are resident in various parts of Norfolk! And though your language may deeply wound the feelings of my children, and children’s children, as well as my personal friends, who may read your Vindicator’s humiliating account of me, yet oh! may no unhallowed resentment be excited in their hearts, nor any alienation be produced in their affections from Wesleyan Methodism!

What! require me to remove from Norfolk, as a vile, injurious culprit, as if I could not be suffered to remain in that county, lest I should corrupt the people! Was it right thus to treat me as a pernicious fire-brand, who have always been a “peace maker,” and when at the Conference it has uniformly been declared that there has been “no objection against me,” during the thirty-seven years that I have been a Wesleyan minister and when that declaration for the last time was uttered only three or four weeks previous to the date of your cruel “Vindicator?”

Do then my spiritual children ask with grief and surprise, if the minister who instrumentally led them to Christ, salva-



tion and church fellowship, has deserved to be so banished from Norfolk as a dangerous character? With humble, thankful confidence, I point them to Yarmouth for an answer. For there, the great majority of our office-bearers and members, have publicly and privately, by words of touching eloquence, and deeds of substantial sympathy, ignored the Vindicator's statement.

Abraham G. Gourlay, Esq. the mayor, in presiding in a public meeting in the town, expressed his disapproval of the treatment I had received from the Conference, of his high esteem for my character, and gave £5, to make up the loss which I had sustained in being put on the list of supernumeraries. With his amiable wife, he had long been used to go to the parish church on a Sabbath morning, and come to our chapel in the evening. During his mayoralty, he several times received with our people the Lord's Supper, and at my request he had begun to contribute liberally to our connexional funds.

At that public meeting, the Rev. Messrs. Russell, Independent, Simon, of the New Connexion, Meffin, of the Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, Betts and Goss, Baptists, many of the most influential Wesleyans belonging to the circuit, and distinguished ministers and members of other churches, besides those just named, by unmistakeable declarations ignored your Vindicator's statement.

I next point my spiritual children in Norfolk to the city of Norwich. For there also your unwarrantable statement has been openly ignored by a majority of Wesleyan office-bearers and members—by my old esteemed friend, the Rev. John Alexander, the wise, and mild pastor of the Independent church worshipping in Prince's Street chapel,—by the Rev. George Gould the intellectual and intelligent pastor of the Baptist church, assembling in St. Mary's chapel, who with Mr. Alexander attended the forenamed Yarmouth meeting on my case, and there both the one and the other, with argumentative and commanding eloquence, defended my character, pouring forth a noble strain of christian sympathy and sentiment. Nor would I overlook the Rev. A. Reed, the excellent pastor of the Old Meeting, who has manifested the most lively interest in my situation. With grateful delight I cannot but allude to Henry Woodcock, Esq., the Mayor of Norwich, who although unable to attend the Yarmouth meeting, sent £5, with a note highly commendatory of my conduct and



character. For more than thirty years, he and his kind hearted lady, had attended our Wesleyan ministry. When some years since he was the Sheriff of Norwich, one of his first public acts was to preside at our Missionary Meeting in East Dereham. On his retiring from the office of chief Magistrate, the citizens expressed their high sense of his services, alike honourable to him and to themselves.

My esteemed friend, W. H. Cozen Hardy, Esq. also sent £5. to the Yarmouth Meeting, but this instance of his kindness perhaps needs explanation. For some have falsely reported as before noticed, that the cause of my conduct which so offended the last Conference, was my pecuniary obligations to this gentleman. But surely an effect must *follow*, and not *precede* its cause, and the conduct by which I unfortunately gave such offence, occurred in the Minor District Meeting, in May, in the Conference in August, and Mr. Hardy's generous contribution was not given till the following September.

I next point to my spiritual children in Lynn, Holt and other towns in Norfolk, where the bulk of Wesleyan Methodists, including the expelled and unexpelled have ignored your statement.

O! if you wished your readers to believe from your Vindicator, that I was deservedly sent away from Norfolk, as if I had been a pest and disgrace to Methodism in that county, what must many think of your conduct? For numbers will long remember Mr. Russell's remark at the Yarmouth Meeting, "that he would rather be Thomas Rowland than the President of the Methodist Conference, or the President's President, Jabez Bunting." This I confess was putting me far above my merits, and as you must perceive far above that of even the Vindicator. Mr. Russell also stated, with regard to Messrs. Hardy and Colman, for opposing whose expulsion I have suffered so much, "that there is not a christian church within the four seas, but what would be glad to receive them."

But as I understand that you, Mr. S. Jackson, have lately been in Norfolk, if you can produce five Wesleyans, five ministers of the Established Church, or of the Dissenting Churches and five magistrates, all resident in that county, who will attest with their signatures that they consider the offensive statement in your Vindicator is correct, I will produce double the number who will attest with their signatures that they deem it a flagrant untruth.

To say so much about myself is irksome to my feelings, but you have forced me to it in self-defence. Nor is it without pain that I have made such statements as must appear to the disadvantage of some of my ministerial brethren. For they still live in my warm affection and high esteem. While I cannot but condemn the treatment which I received at the last Conference, yet since then, as well as before, when their character, either collectively or separately, has been unjustly assailed in my presence, I have more than once, been their unflinching defender; avowing that I consider, taking number for number, they are the best christian ministers in the world. I blame not the many for the faults of a few. Vast numbers of them seldom, if ever attend a Conference. Every year some are going off and some are coming on the stage of life. Hence scores of our pastors are as ignorant of Conferential proceedings as their flocks are. On this account, to not a few even of my brother ministers my statements will most likely appear strange and startling. But I have not gratuitously made them. Nor have I been hasty in publishing my grievances,—as a proof of this, look at a “former period of disturbance” in Norfolk, which now for the first time is laid before the public, in consequence of your referring to it in a manner so calculated to injure my character where I am a stranger. No less than eleven years have rolled away since that disturbance occurred.

Had the Conference, in the minutes or elsewhere, published an official statement of my case, it would have deserved and obtained from me a deference, which of course I cannot be expected to manifest towards your unauthorized Vindicator, which though not so reprehensible as the “Fly Sheets,” or “the Papers on Wesleyan Matters,” yet, I think, is so uncharitable in its spirit, and erroneous in its statements as to be utterly unworthy of the support of pious Wesleyans.

But I trust and pray that God will educe good out of the evils which we deplore, and send peace and prosperity to our agitated Connexion.

It is in my view a remarkable fact, that in your account of my painful affair, you make not the slightest allusion to the Holy Scriptures. Yet if ever that noble saying “The Bible and the Bible alone is the Religion of the Protestants,” loudly called for a practical recognition, it certainly does so in these days of “Papal Aggression.” And on what occasion could this be more proper than that of exercising such church disci-

pline as I have experienced to my sorrow, and which has been so openly censured by so many of the wise and good of different religious communities. Now, as according to Lord Bacon, "History is philosophy teaching by example," let us consider my case in connection with an important historical portion of the New Testament.

The conduct of the Lord Jesus toward Simon Peter, after the great wickedness which Simon Peter had committed in denying thrice his divine Friend and Saviour. Jerusalem, A. D. 33.

1—The Lord Jesus required that Peter should be converted, saying "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." Luke xxii, 23. Without conversion no one can be a full and proper member of the Church of Christ or the kingdom of heaven. Matt. xviii, 3.

2—The Lord Jesus having converted and forgiven Peter, and led him gratefully to exclaim, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee," then renewed his commission to the christian ministry in those authoritative words, "Feed my lambs," "Feed my sheep." John xxi, 15, 16, 17.

3—Though it is a grievous thing in the Romanists to assert in support of the supremacy of the Pope, the pretended successor of the Apostle, that Peter is "The Rock" on which the church is built;—yet the

The conduct of the Conference towards me, after I had refused in a Minor District Meeting, to be a consenting party to the expulsion of Messrs Hardy and Colman, and giving in writing nine Reasons for my refusal. London, A. D. 1850.

1—The Conference did not require me to be converted, but recognised me as being a full and proper member of the Wesleyan section of the christian church and one of its accredited ministers. For as the Vindicator affirms, "it must be remembered that Mr. Rowland is still a Wesleyan minister."

2—The Conference while owning me as being "still a Wesleyan minister," laid me aside and restricted me from doing the full work of one in feeding the lambs and the sheep, by making me a supernumerary and ranking me with the "Worn Out Ministers."

3—The Conference put me out of the bishoprick, or superintendency of a Circuit, demanded from me an Apology, adjudged to me an Admonition from the chair, and that I should not be "allowed to take



Lord Jesus did not lower Peter in his ministerial status, but continued and recognised his apostleship and bishoprick. As corroborative of Peter's presiding, it is, I think, worthy of notice, that after a most interesting speech which he addressed to the 120 disciples, he proposed that some one should be ordained to fill the bishoprick from which Judas had fallen by transgression. Acts, i, 15—26.

4—The Lord Jesus did not order Peter to remove from Jerusalem the place where he had thrice denied his glorious Redeemer, where his "conduct had been so mischievous," and likely to be "the instrument of great injury to Christianity." For *there*, Peter remained, *there* on the day of Pentecost under his preaching and that of the other apostles 3000 souls were converted and added to the church. There he and John at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple healed a lame man and preached the gospel. Acts iii. There he and John were imprisoned for their zeal in their master's cause. Acts iv. There despite of imprisonment and threatenings from the Jewish rulers, Peter "took heed to himself and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost had made him an overseer," having the chief superintendency of what might not impro-

any part as a member of a Minor District Meeting."

4—The Conference ordered me to remove from Yarmouth where for twelve months I had exercised my ministry, had been blest with spiritual fruit in the conversion of sinners and edification of believers, when I had been unanimously invited by our people to remain. Not only so. I was actually ordered by the Conference to depart from Norfolk, though not the slightest stain was on my moral and religious character, and though no charge of moral delinquency had even been alleged against me. In proof of all this I appeal to the facts which I have before adduced.



perly be called the Jerusalem Circuit.

5—The conduct of the Lord Jesus was an impressive illustration of the truth that his “Kingdom is not of this world.” For it involved no appeal to earthly motives, no infliction of pecuniary loss to Peter for his wicked denial of his great benefactor, and no offer of worldly honour or advantage for his conversion and restoration. It gave no intimation that he would be one shilling the poorer for his fall, nor one shilling the richer if he would repent. But it did appeal to the highest feelings of Peter’s heart and the noblest dictates of his nature when “the Lord turned and looked on Peter,” with that kind, upbraiding look of love, which led him blushing out of the High Priest’s palace, and to weep bitterly,—and when the joy-inspiring message of mercy was sent from the sepulchre of the risen Saviour. “Go tell his disciples and *Peter*.” It also powerfully appealed to the grandeurs of the bleeding cross and of eternity, in asking “Lovest thou me?” and he giving the charge. “Feed my lambs, feed my sheep,” for the charge meant, that the immortal souls attending Peter’s ministry must be affectionately and wisely fed with gospel, eternal truth, to save them, with himself, from the

5—The Conference in exercising Discipline on me, I think, proceeded not in accordance with our Lord’s declaration, “my Kingdom is not of this world,” but as if it were a secular organization labouring to accomplish its purpose by depriving me of earthly comforts and advantages. For as before shown, in making me a supernumerary, it inflicted a heavy pecuniary loss amounting to about £80 per annum, and cast me forth on the wide world without a house or home. Had I been a lover of money like Judas, Annanias or Saphira, if this harsh proceeding was not likely to make me believe that three and two make six, or that we did not violate our Laws in the expulsion of Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith, it was certainly calculated, though I am sure not intended, to tempt me to speak and act as if I believed the falsehood to be a truth, to avert such loss and injury to myself and family. And in private, more than one brother minister, in the simplicity of their souls and kindness of their hearts, in order to persuade me to make the required apology, eloquently urged the argument “remember you are not so young as you once were, and think how seriously this affair may affect the comfort

eternal damnation of hell, in-  
to the eternal life and glory  
of heaven.

of yourself and family." My  
reply was, why were I to com-  
ply with your request, you  
yourselves would probably  
despise me, *at any rate, I  
should despise myself.*

In thus pointing out the difference between our Saviour's conduct towards Peter and that of the Conference towards me, I do not admit that the two cases are the same, or even similar. Far otherwise. For Peter had committed scandalous sin, such as was calculated to make the enemies of Christ to blaspheme. But in my case, all glory to divine free grace, though I own my continual need of the atoning blood of the cross, and aid of the Holy Spirit, and feel that the prayer most appropriate for me is, "God be merciful to me a sinner," yet, as before stated, the Conference laid no sin to my charge, but in the usual examination declared there was "no objection against me." Still, how severe the conduct of the Conference to me, and how merciful that of our divine Redeemer towards Peter, as set forth in the comparative statement just given. This affair is the more remarkable when it is considered, that I could not make the required "apology" as before mentioned without committing sin, in acting the part of liar and hypocrite!

In conclusion, I remark: that though some modification of our Rules is desirable, especially in regard to the Stationing Committee, of this I am more fully convinced than ever; yet *that*, I think, is not the good most needed in our torn, bleeding and agitated Connexion. Human legislation in a church, even where its ministers are the legislators, will not be better than its authors make it. It is sure to be wise, unselfish, benevolent and useful, or otherwise, in accordance with the hearts, tongues, pens and influence of the few among the many, and whom the many implicitly follow, in its venerable assembly. Alas! among such priestly legislators, how oft, as attested by ecclesiastical history, has "mischief been framed by law"—yes, wide-spread, appalling, untold and unutterable "mischief,"—awfully developing the crafty selfishness and heartless cruelty of the framers, or their want of far-seeing wisdom, when their intentions have been good and their efforts well meant.

By obstinately clinging, in the government of a church, in the enlightenment, strength and vigour of its manhood to ec-

clesiastical regulations which were proper for it only in the weakness of its unreasoning infancy, have its sublime capabilities been cramped, its struggles for expansion and freedom neutralized, its glory tarnished and its usefulness impeded, while the ransomed "world around has been lying in wickedness." But O! at present a deeper humiliation appears to be more loudly called for among our ministers than even a better legislation."

For my own part, I think, a "penitential confession" far more intense in feeling, and profound in self-loathing and abasement before God, than what I uttered in the Manchester Conference in 1849, is now incumbent on me and my brother ministers. For as in regard to the "papal aggression" it has been unmistakably avowed in almost every town and city, and in the most crowded assemblies in the empire, that it has been encouraged and promoted by Puseyism in the Established Church, the Puseyism, as its very name intimates, which originated in a minister; so, among us, where did the agitation commence which is so deplorably rampant in our Connexion? You know it began among our ministers. For though few were the ministers who were supposed to be the culpable occasion of the "Fly Sheets" and "The Papers on Wesleyan Matters" being written, and though small was the number of our ministers suspected as the writers of them; yet by so many of us reading them, talking of them, raising a noise and stir about them, together with other untoward circumstances, we witness such a state of things, and we hear of such doings in our once happy Zion, as may well make "the ears" of our spiritual Israel "to tingle." Let us then separately in our studies or domestic circles, or unitedly in the sanctuary, "mourn, weep and humble ourselves in the sight of God." Let us in fervent and believing prayer, beseech God to "spare our people, bless our inheritance and lift us up for ever." For we know who hath said "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find." If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Then blest with the spirit of wisdom our discord will cease, our religious contests be ended, and all the bitterness, malignity and deplorable consequences of the perversion of our highest and most sacred privileges be banished from our Zion. Blest with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we shall enjoy and evince the mild and peaceable

mind which was in our Saviour, and distribute a pervasive influence which shall assimilate our flocks to their pastors.

“ No horrid alarum of war  
Shall break our eternal repose ;  
No sound of the trumpet is there,  
Where Jesus's Spirit o'erflows :  
Appeased by the charms of his grace,  
We all shall in amity join ;  
And kindly each other embrace,  
And love with a passion like thine.”



## ADDENDA.

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### *Note 1.*

Since the observation, on p. 20, relative to Mr. Scott's conduct were in type, I have received the following letter from the Rev. gentleman in reply to another communication which I lately addressed to him :

London, Feb. 3rd, 1851.

"Dear Sir,

I understood that the Conference made you a supernumerary *for one year*, in the hope that during the year, and by the next Conference, you would set yourself right with that Body, and be prepared again to take a circuit. Under such circumstances, I do not think I am justified in advancing the sum usually granted to supernumeraries for furniture.

I am, yours truly,

Rev. T. Rowland.

JOHN SCOTT."

### *Note 2, p. 15.*

Having stated that I signed the President's Declaration to aid the Motion which I intended to bring forward again, on the subject of a Modification of our Rules as bearing on the Stationing Committee, it may be necessary to add a word of explanation. That Motion I considered would be in perfect accordance with "the essential principles of our system," being meant and calculated to conserve those principles, by amending the administration of them in a most important department of Methodism, and so as to render the operations of the Stationing Committee more fair and unobjectionable, more conducive to the good of our Connexion, more satisfactory to our ministers and people, and promotive of the glory of God. So that I think there was no inconsistency between my signing that Declaration and my cherished and avowed design in this matter.

## ERRATA.

Page 22, lines 8 and 10 for *Stationary* read *Stationing*.

Page 39, line 23, for 1850 read *Rules of 1835*.

Page 50, line 34, for *two* read *ten* years.

Page 57, lines 20 and 22 for *twisting* read *treating*.

